September 25, 2006 49145 $3.95 U.S., $4.95 Canadian

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NATIONAL R

Madam Speaker?

THE MIDTERM ELECTIONS AND THE NANCY PELOSI DEMOCRATS

Kate O'Beirne & Ramesh Ponnuru

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NATIONAL REVIEW

SEPTEMBER 25, 2006 VOL. LVIII, NO. 17

www.nationalreview.com

■ COVER STORY

Preventing Pelosi

The question about the November elections isn't whether the Republicans will lose seats, but how many they will lose. As summer draws to a close, the forecasts are getting bleak. If Republicans lose 15 House seats, they will lose their majority as well. "Speaker Nancy Pelosi"? Here's our prognosis. *By Kate O'Beirne & Ramesh Ponnuru*

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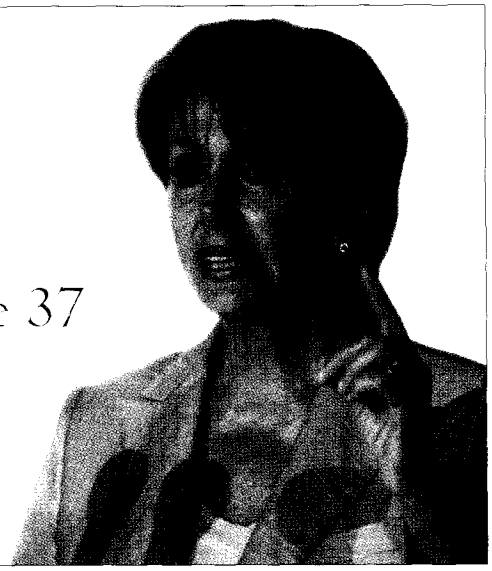

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COVER: *Stefan Zaklin/EPA/Corbis*

NATIONAL REVIEW (ISSN: 0028-0038) is published bi-weekly, except for the first issue in January, by NATIONAL REVIEW, Inc., at 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. ©National Review, Inc., 2006. Address all editorial mail, manuscripts, letters to the editor, etc., to Editorial Dept., NATIONAL REVIEW, 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Address all subscription mail orders, changes of address, undeliverable copies, etc., to NATIONAL REVIEW, Circulation Dept., P. O. Box 668, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054-0668; phone, 815-734-1232, Monday–Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. Eastern time. Adjustment requests should be accompanied by a current mailing label or facsimile. Direct classified advertising inquiries to: Classifieds Dept., NATIONAL REVIEW, 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016 or call 212-679-7330. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NATIONAL REVIEW, Circulation Dept., P. O. Box 668, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054-0668. Printed in the U.S.A.

RATES: $59.00 a year (24 issues). Add $21.50 for Canada and other foreign subscriptions, per year. (All payments in U.S. currency.) The editors cannot be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts or artwork unless return postage or, better, a stamped self-addressed envelope is enclosed. Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the editors.

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NATIONAL REVIEW

September 25 issue; printed September 7

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SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES 815-734-1232
WASHINGTON OFFICE 202-543-9226

ADVERTISING SALES 212-679-7330
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letters to the editor

DAM FACTS

In last issue's editorial, "Katrina Storm Warnings," I was disappointed to see that your writers did not do their homework regarding the maintenance of the almost 400 miles of levees around the New Orleans region. The article incorrectly states that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was responsible for the maintenance of these structures before Katrina hit. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact, while many levees throughout the country have been constructed by the Corps of Engineers, most of these levees are turned over to local entities for maintenance. In the case of the levees in New Orleans, maintenance responsibility fell solely to the local levee boards, not the Corps of Engineers. The only levees maintained by the Corps of Engineers in the New Orleans area are the levees along the Mississippi River. Those levees remain intact, unlike those maintained by the local levee boards.

G. Bowman
Via e-mail

GRAY-HAIRED WISDOM

As a member of the potentially tyrannical elderly, I rise in protest of Kevin Hassett's "The Tyranny of the Retiree" in the last issue. Obviously, my generation is ailing and in the process of dying, and therefore requires more and more medical care. However, we have also been required to invest in the public-health sector of government for many years via Medicare withholding. We continue to subsidize Medicare Part B with monthly payments. When I look at Medicaid in its various forms, I see a lot more spent on obstetric and pediatric care than on the elderly poor. The majority of patients in county public-health departments are not elderly. In addition, I resent being lumped in with the AARP, which many of us see as self-serving rather than elderly serving. Many elderly people would vote for privatizing Social Security, opting instead for Health Savings Accounts and catastrophic insurance.

Tom Gibson, M.D.
Scottsboro, Ala.

AIR POWER

Mr. John-Bob Thornton of North Carolina suggests in a letter to NR that Anthony Daniels should have considered the use of an air rifle to repel goats. He suggests that this would be more effective than methods Mr. Daniels used. I believe Mr. Thornton may not understand that in British English the word *catapult* is used to mean both the medieval weapon and that which Americans call a slingshot. A well-designed slingshot in reasonably skilled hands would be as effective as an air rifle at a lower cost. Air rifles more powerful than slingshots exist, but they would do more damage than just stinging the goats and probably cause Mr. Daniels more problems.

Marv Alcorn
Burnet, Tex.

SMOOTH CELLING

I have always admired the linguistic standards maintained by NR. I wish therefore to raise a question about your usage of the construction "cellphone" versus the original two-word "cell phone." While the "cellular telephone" root clearly needs abbreviation, it seems rather drastic to compress the two words into one. Doing so would suggest that other phone types should also be compacted to single-word status: "cordedphone," "wirelessphone," or perhaps "cordlessphone." These wouldn't work. So why does "cellphone"?

Jeremy Weidenhof
Houston, Tex.

THE EDITORS REPLY: *Cellmate, cellblock, cellphone. Sold?*

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What Does This Stand For?

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THE WEEK

■ CBS's plans to cast the next season of *Survivor* with race-based tribes drew a storm of criticism, and protests at its mid-town Manhattan headquarters. The Black, Latino, and Asian Caucuses of the New York City Council led the charge.

■ Mitt Romney, the governor of Massachusetts and a GOP presidential hopeful, has a history of polygamy in his family, the *Salt Lake Tribune* has reported. Romney's great-grandfather had five wives, and two great-great-grandfathers had ten each. But the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to which Romney belongs, disavowed polygamy in 1890. As the *Tribune* article acknowledges, the governor "is a confirmed monogamist of nearly four decades." Should Mitt Romney join a 2008 race that includes John McCain, Rudy Giuliani, Newt Gingrich, and George Allen, the only candidate in the GOP field with just one wife would be the Mormon.

■ President Bush has embarked on a series of new speeches defending the Iraq War. He realizes that he must defend the war—there's no getting around it, whatever some conservative pundits and scared GOP incumbents might wish. He has shifted rhetorical ground in two important ways. First, his team no longer talks of "staying the course" (which isn't very appealing to a public that doesn't like the course we've been on) but instead emphasizes "adapting to win." Second, he is warning of the grim consequences of failure in Iraq, rather than pumping up a "progress" that the public is primed to discount. Of course, it is conditions on the ground that matter most. Additional American troops have made a difference in the Baghdad neighborhoods to which they've been deployed, but it isn't clear that there are enough of them to make a dramatic improvement overall. If there aren't enough, Bush should send more, before a disastrous November here at home ties his hands.

■ Philosophers care deeply about names and words, since they are the building blocks of thought. Ordinary people navigate by the seat of their pants, agreeing that roses smell sweet whatever we call them. Politicians fall somewhere in the middle, seeking to lead without appearing to be finicky or hermetic. So whom are we fighting in the Terror War? Terrorists? Evildoers, as President Bush used to say? Islamic fascists, as he said more recently? The last term is not a bad one, suggesting a totalitarian movement that claims inspiration from Islam: exactly what bin Laden's followers and Khomeini's heirs preach, and practice. (Saddam too, in his last years in power, put a Koranic verse on the Iraqi flag.) American Muslim groups objected that the term implicates them all. It isn't meant to, but we can all afford not to give or take unnecessary offense. Everyone knows we're not fighting the IRA, or your last cab driver.

ROMAN GENN

Richard Armitage, left; Lewis Libby, right *(see page 14)*

■ Defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld's speech to the American Legion ruffled feathers. Frank Rich called it a "toxic effort to impugn the patriotism of administration critics by conflating dissent on Iraq with cut-and-run surrender and incipient treason." Rumsfeld asked four questions: In a world of WMD, "can we truly afford to believe that . . . vicious extremists can be appeased?" (a thought aimed at Iran); can "free countries . . . negotiate a separate peace with terrorists?" (a thought for some of our allies); can today's threats be treated as "simply law-enforcement problems?" (a thought for the Clintonistas, who mostly treated them that way); is "America, not the enemy . . . the source of the world's troubles?" (the late Susan Sontag said essentially that in *The New Yorker* the week after 9/11). He linked these confusions with the "moral confusion" of the years before World War II. Whom does that impugn? Charles Lindbergh was not unpatriotic or treacherous, and neither is Frank Rich. They're simply wrong.

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THE WEEK...

■ Speaker-in-waiting Nancy Pelosi got off a shot at Rumsfeld, asking him to "explain why our troops have now been fighting in Iraq longer than it took our forces to defeat the Nazis in Europe." Because guerrillas are not countries? Because there is no law of nature saying that no war shall last longer than World War II? But accept, for a moment, her premise, and look again at the comparison. Germany and the United States went to war in December 1941, after Pearl Harbor. Germany surrendered unconditionally in May 1945. That's three years, five months (shorter than the Iraq War so far). But is that how long it took to defeat the Nazis in Europe? Try telling that to Britain (bombed August–October 1940), France (conquered June 1940), or Poland (invaded September 1939). Even when liberals yank their faces away from the mirror and look at history, they're still looking in the mirror.

JOHN GRESS/REUTERS

■ Former Iranian president Mohammad Khatami began his tour of the United States, on a visa issued by the State Department, addressing Muslim groups in Chicago. He is due to speak at Washington National Cathedral, and Jimmy Carter naturally wants to talk with him. Back in Tehran, Khatami heads the International Institute for Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures. Khatami, generally portrayed as a moderate, was a frontman for dictatorship and terror during his years in office. Why he should represent Islamic civilization is a question best addressed to his sponsors. His visit may further radicalize American Muslims, finding fanaticism and violence their route to visibility; it feeds the megalomania of Jimmy Carter, our worst ex-president; it is one more stage in the slide of mainline Protestantism into a clerical fifth column. If the administration wants to send signals to Iran, it should speak to Khatami itself. Better, keep him home.

■ In our last issue, we took Sen. George Allen to task for the way he taunted a 20-year-old Indian-American aide to his opponent ("Macaca, or whatever his name is"). It was mean, juvenile, and unfunny. But the press, especially the *Washington Post*, has been nothing short of disgraceful in its political exploitation of the racial elements of the story. It isn't just that the comments have received disproportionate attention, although that's true: Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden—both, like Allen, presidential aspirants—have made comments about Indians and Indian Americans at least as offensive, but without this kind of media frenzy. What's worse is the quality of the reporting. Newspapers have noted that Allen said "welcome to America and the real world of Virginia" to the aide while neglecting to mention that Allen had just claimed that his opponent spent too much time in the Beltway. The omitted context changes the cast of the comment. News accounts have reported, as a simple matter of fact, that "macaca" is an "obscure racial slur" because it sounds like "macaque," a word that Francophones use to belittle blacks. Allen shouldn't have given his enemies in the press an opening, but it is to their discredit that they took it.

■ Since the Senate was scheduled to be out of session for more than 30 days this summer, everyone knew that Bush's appeals-court nominations would expire. Ordinarily, the senators would unanimously allow the nominations to continue, but this time the Democrats objected. So the president had to renominate them. Let's hope the Republicans take the Democrats' petty act as an opportunity to put the judges issue back on the front burner. The issue has played to Republicans' advantage over the past few years, and the party has a chance to put some good judges on the bench before November. The time to move is now.

■ The Census bureau reported that, in 2005, 5.4 percent of Americans lived in extreme poverty, making less than 50 percent of a poverty-line income. In 2004, the percentage of Americans living in extreme poverty was the exact same 5.4 percent. The *New York Times* reports this news as a "sharp increase in those living in extreme poverty." Translated from *Times*-speak, the point is that the proportion of poor people living in extreme poverty has gone up. In this case, that isn't because deep poverty has increased; it's because shallow poverty has decreased. Which, to clarify the *Times*'s report a bit more, is good news.

■ Chalk it up to the power of publicity. Two recent papers published in top scientific journals suggested that there might well be ethical ways to produce stem cells that would be a genetic match for patients. A third paper, about a different method of producing stem cells, leaves important ethical concerns unmet and would not result in stem cells genetically matched to anyone. Yet the first two papers have received little attention, and the third has been all over the news. The difference? The third paper was the product of Advanced Cell Technology, a commercial firm with a publicity apparatus. We are great fans of private-sector initiative, but ACT's goal appears to be devising a flimsy excuse to get around restrictions on federal funding for stem-cell research. Its method involves removing a cell from early-stage embryos at fertility clinics. The detached cell would be used to produce stem cells, while the embryo from which it was removed would be implanted in a woman's womb. Supposedly, the embryo would not die in the process of getting the stem cells—although the news coverage barely paused to explain that in ACT's work the embryos were, in fact, destroyed. But let's say the method allowed the embryo to survive. We still would not know whether it would be safe for the child down the road, and the genetic-match problem would substantially reduce the medical usefulness of this type of research. For both ethical and practical reasons, then, other methods of producing stem cells without killing human embryos seem more promising—and more deserving of federal funds.

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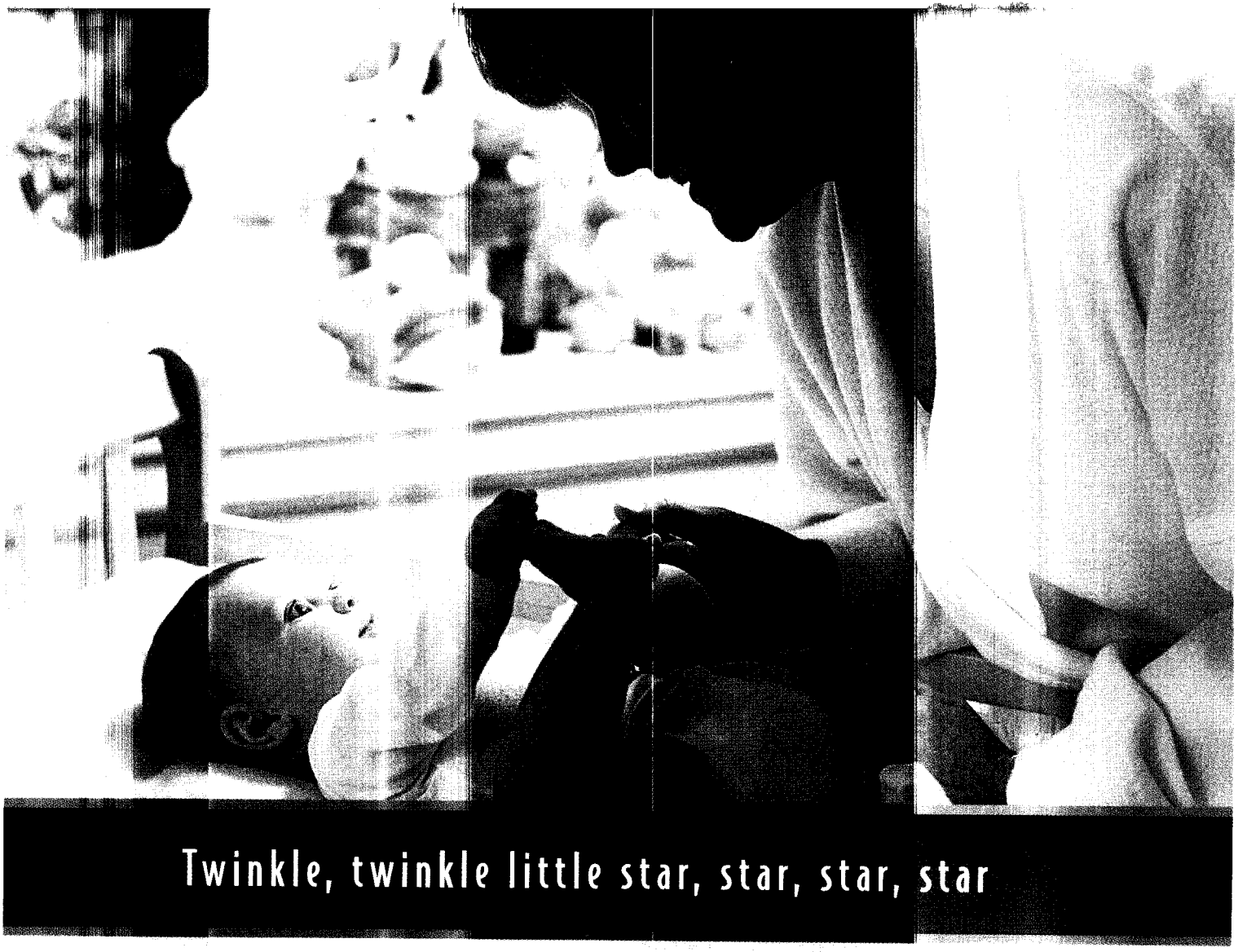

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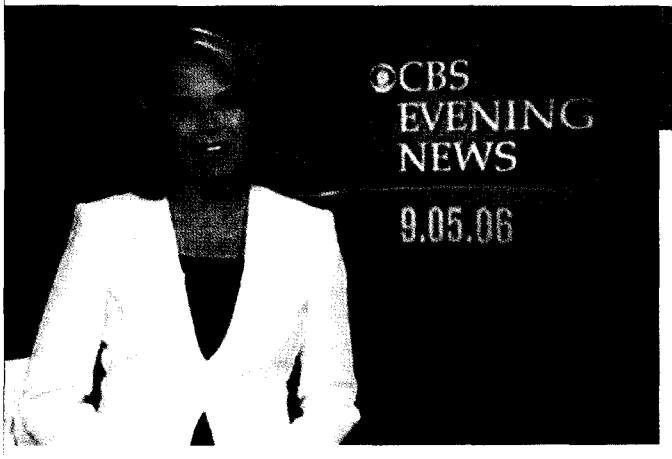
THE WEEK...

■ The Food and Drug Administration approved "Plan B," which is supposedly an "emergency contraceptive," as an over-the-counter drug for adults. Legally, there was little the Bush administration could do but delay the inevitable legalization of these over-the-counter sales. But it is an anomalous result: The ordinary birth-control pill requires a prescription, but this higher-dosage version of the drug does not. More troubling is that, in some unknown percentage of cases, the drug works not by preventing conception but by causing the newly conceived human embryo to die. *Caveat emptor* is, unfortunately, all that can be said now.

■ More4, a British digital TV station associated with Channel 4, is about to release *Death of a President*, a mockumentary set in 2007 that begins with the assassination of George W. Bush. A More4 publicity photo shows Bush being shot while leaving a Chicago hotel after a speech. "We know some people are going to be offended," said Peter Dale, head of the network. "But you always risk offending people when you open people's eyes to the way the world is." Dante, who was at least as talented as Peter Dale, put traitors and assassins in Cocytus, an icy lake. "Beneath the clamor, beneath the monotonous circlings, beneath the fires of Hell, here at the center of the lost soul and the lost city, lie the silence and rigidity and the eternal frozen cold. . . . A cold and cruel egotism, gradually striking inward till even the lingering passions of hatred and destruction are frozen into immobility—that is the final state of sin" (Dorothy Sayers).

■ When it comes to the environment, California relishes its King Canute role. It embraced the "negawatts" energy strategy—and ended up with rolling blackouts. It mandated that



REUTERS/CBS EVENING NEWS

Hello, Perky

I AM writing this the day after Katie Couric took the helm of *CBS Evening News*. Full disclosure: I didn't watch much of the broadcast. Even though I make some of my living by staying abreast of the media, I just couldn't be bothered to care. Or, to be more accurate, I couldn't be bothered to care enough to remember that she was on. Brit Hume's "Political Grapevine" segment had just started on Fox News when the curtain went up on Couric, and before it dawned on me that the princess of perk was on the "Tiffany network," she was already wrapping up her closing thoughts. From what I could glean, these thoughts were, well, perky. No Ratheresque "Courage" for Katie—nor those even more Ratheresque outbursts that tended to sound more like code to World War II troops behind enemy lines than news anchoring. "That's the news for tonight. Jimmy crack corn and the fat man bathes in dirty moonlight."

From what I read about her performance, Katie Couric was Aesopian in her Katie Couricness. Just as the scorpion said to the frog, "You knew I was a scorpion when you agreed to carry me on your back" (or words to that effect), anybody at CBS complaining about Couric's coquettishness need only be told, "You knew she was Katie Couric when you hired her."

But the broader point about Couric is: Who cares? The Big Three anchor system is a nostalgic cargo cult in a profession which can't bring itself to accept that the era when these broadcasters were "the voice of God" (in the words of one CBS exec) is long gone. All this chatter about how Couric is a "pioneer" fails to grasp that the frontier is closed. It's like hailing the first woman steamship captain long after the rise of the locomotive and the automobile. Yeah, it's an accomplishment. But it's an accomplishment on a sharply sliding scale—something like holding the best Oktoberfest in Orlando.

First of all, being an anchor just isn't that hard. Broadcast journalism is one of the few fields in American life where the work gets demonstrably easier the higher you go. Or, to be fairer, the parts of the job that have to do with what everyone thinks of as "journalism" get easier and easier, and in some cases the journalism simply vanishes altogether. Andrew Tyndall, the respected TV analyst, defines the job of news anchor as being able to read the news and "sitting behind the desk when there's a crisis."

Second, and more to the point, nobody's watching. The average viewer of a Big Three broadcast is 60 years old. Only about 10 percent of viewers are under 35. The dream is that by having Katie on the air, CBS will attract an audience slightly less interested in Viagra, Flomax, Depends, and other products aimed at the geriatric set. But the truth is that younger people will never return to the Big Three networks, for the simple reason that they don't have to. News-anchor festishists forget that Cronkite & Co. commanded so much authority mainly because they had no competition. CBS is betting that, by trading avuncular for peppy, it will be able to turn back the clock. It's just not going to happen.

—JONAH GOLDBERG

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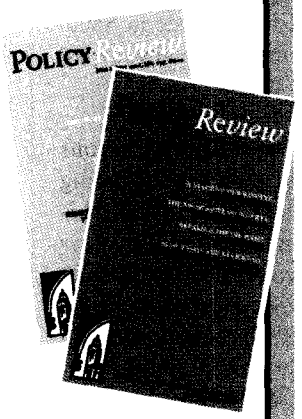
POLICY REVIEW



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Calling for a "Manhattan Project" to wean the country from oil won't work; the original Manhattan Project occurred during a life-and-death struggle, and the singular objective was clear from the outset. A return to energy abundance needs no such crash program, nor — given the enormous range of policy choices and technical alternatives — could one be devised. A dramatic government policy is much less important than a clear and consistent one. To give market forces a chance to redirect the energy industry, entrepreneurs need some assurance that risks won't be enhanced by a government that cannot set or maintain priorities. What should take oil's place? On that subject, today's markets are utterly confused.

—Steve Stein

Sustaining Our Resolve

Eyes on the arrows as well as the olive branch

During the first phase of this war on terror, going back certainly to the 1970s, we were essentially passive. We were hit by increasing numbers of terrorist acts, but, though there was a gradual buildup of concern, we did nothing significant in response to these attacks. Then September 11 woke America up. We reacted powerfully, putting in place a different philosophy and taking a great variety of actions to implement that philosophy. We are now nearly five years away from that calamitous event. The war continues, but the juices of reaction to 9/11 have subsided. We must now realize that the job in a third phase of the war — necessary if we are to be successful — is to put our efforts on a sustainable basis, gaining broad support at home and abroad. As in the cold war, public understanding and support will be as crucial as persistent pressure and the will to win.

—George P. Shultz

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The Week...

at least 2 percent of the auto fleet be electric cars by the year 2001, a goal ultimately abandoned when reality intruded. Now California proposes to save us from global warming through curbs on its greenhouse-gas emissions, and a pending ballot initiative would ban buying electricity produced from coal in other states. (California has no coal-fired plants of its own, naturally.) The hosannas from environmentalists overlook the embarrassment that the California target—returning to 1990 emission levels by the year 2020—is much less ambitious than the beloved Kyoto Protocol, and that the legislation includes a "safety valve" that will allow regulators to extend the targets if the state's economy is suffering. We bet on a target extension.

■ "This will be his great credit in historical terms," wrote Theodore White of Barry Goldwater in 1964, "that finally he introduced the condition and quality of American morality and life as a subject of political debate." Goldwater condemned the Democratic platform for omitting any reference to God. Nowadays it is convenient for liberals and libertarians alike to airbrush away Goldwater's social conservatism in favor of his late-in-life social liberalism. A new HBO documentary, *Mr. Conservative*, seems to be part of this project. CC Goldwater, the senator's granddaughter, has been playing up the pro-abortion and pro-gay positions Goldwater took at the end of his career. That is part of his biography, but we hope that we are not about to witness extremism in the service of revisionism.

■ There wasn't much scholarship in the study by John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago and Stephen Walt of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government that claimed to expose the disproportionate influence of the Israel lobby on U.S. policy. It was a shoddy piece of work, further marred by a paranoid tone. But nothing sells quite like a conspiracy theory, and the professors are enjoying their moment in the sun. At a recent forum organized by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (itself not known for scholarly dispassion), they accepted buttons proclaiming "Fight the Israel Lobby" and averred that Jews at the Pentagon "have attachments that shape how they think about the Middle East." It is a hallmark of a lazy mind to attack someone's identity instead of his views. ("Mearsheimer. A Teuton, eh? Just like those Nazi chaps . . .") But if any reply is needed to the idea that American Jewry has brought the jihad upon us, it should be enough to note that Osama bin Laden's grievance against the U.S. was not its support for Israel but its presence in Saudi Arabia, and that Europe—ever reliable in its antipathy toward Israel—has not been spared the suicide bomb.

■ Republicans on the Senate Defense Appropriations Committee have made the baffling decision to cut funding for the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center in half. This will result in savings of $7 million—a piddling sum by government standards. Yet there is a very real need to provide soldiers with treatment for brain injuries: According to the *USA Today* report that broke the news, "10% of all troops in Iraq, and up to 20% of front line infantry troops, suffer concussions during combat tours." When asked to justify the cut, a committee staffer told the paper, "Honestly, [the senators] would have loved to have funded it, but there were just so many priorities." How the committee failed to find a different $7 million to cut from a $468 billion appropriations bill is beyond us.

■ This summer, as North Korea prepared to test-launch one of its Taepodong-2 missile, which may have the ability to reach parts of the United States, NR and others suggested that the Pentagon shoot it down with a rudimentary missile-defense system based in Alaska and California. Critics scoffed at this idea and, as it happened, the Taepodong-2 either failed or was aborted 42 seconds after launch. But now comes evidence that our missile defenses just might have worked had they been used: On September 1, an anti-ballistic missile hit a mock enemy warhead in a test that was meant to simulate the North Korean threat. Pentagon and industry officials had downplayed the importance of the experiment. Afterward, however, they let themselves crow a little: Air Force Lt. Gen. Henry "Trey" Obering, director of the Missile Defense Agency, declared that the United States would have a "good chance" of intercepting a real target. Someday, we may have to do this. In the meantime, our program will serve a useful purpose merely by forcing the Kim Jong Ils of the world to question their pursuit of nuclear weapons and rocket technology.

■ You have to give it to Hezbollah: They know how to lie and deceive. Their masterstroke of disinformation had to do with the ambulance at Qana. Producing a vehicle with a hole right through the Red Cross on the roof, Hezbollah spokesmen claimed that Israeli aircraft had bombed it. To Cathy Gannon, an AP correspondent, goes the credit for being the first to report this story. From her, it spread throughout the world's media, gathering pace as it went, with first one victim discovered to have been screaming inside the ambulance, then three. All fake, all invention. Several bloggers have studied the evidence with forensic skill. Photographs revealed that the ambulance had long been scrapped, and

Judge Taylor's Mind

Like Forever Amber's, it
Tends to ruminate, then flit
Over pertinent case law,
Garnering a rude guffaw
From professors who attacked
Flounce impersonating fact.
Anna Diggs won't, on appeal
(You can bet the ranch), cartwheel.

—W. H. von Dreele

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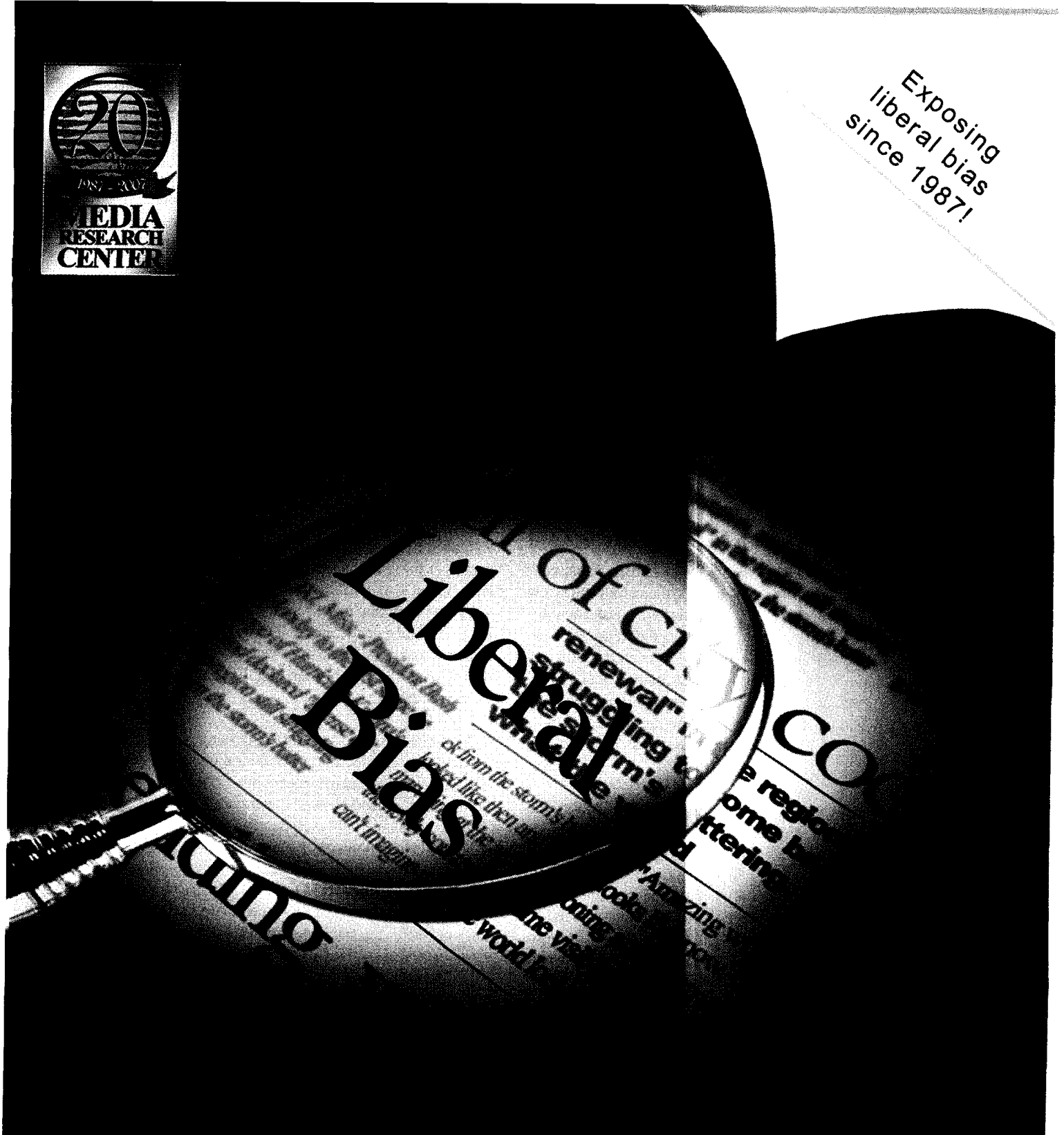

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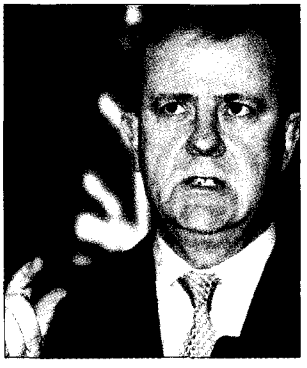
that the hole marked where the air vent had once been. Though rusted, the ambulance's interior was undamaged. There had been no missile. Nobody had been hurt. So the question is: Why are Gannon and her colleagues so eager to attribute war crimes to Israel that they forgo the elementary duty to check facts? Whatever the case, Hezbollah understands that they can count on willing helpers in the international media.



TORSTEN BLACKWOOD/AFP

■ In Australia, Peter Costello is the right-hand man to Prime Minister John Howard, and his potential successor. The economy is his area, but earlier this year he said that people who wanted to live under sharia, or Islamic law, might feel at ease in Saudi Arabia or Iran, "but not Australia." He's no friend of what he describes as "mushy multiculturalism," saying that everyone has to subscribe to an agreed framework to protect the rights and liberties of all. In a recent interview he returned to this theme, speaking of his "vision of a country which defends itself, and one of the things it defends is extraordinary freedom for people inside it." The veteran Howard, thought to have been undecided about his political future, has lately stated that he will be fighting the next election. Costello, 48, can afford to wait. Under either man, Australia looks steadfast, able, and willing to resist encroaching Islamism.

■ The mayor of Caracas, a close ally of Hugo Chávez, has ordered the "forced acquisition" of private golf courses in the Venezuelan capital. He explained that the move would make room for 11,500 new homes for poor families, and that "20 families survive for a week on what's needed to maintain each square meter of grass on a golf course." Such logic provides the link between the ideal of equality and the reality of tyranny. According to the mayor's reasoning, it is the state's responsibility to ensure that none may enjoy luxury while others suffer poverty. But consider the moral disaster that such a principle would create: The security and stability that flow from private ownership would evaporate. No one could safely produce, improve, or acquire any property for himself, since the resulting inequality would only create a new target for "forced acquisition" by the state. Productive incentives would be destroyed. It is for this reason that there is only one way for state-enforced egalitarianism to succeed: by making everyone equally poor.

■ The noble game of cricket—think baseball with only two bases and the pitcher aiming low—was spread to far parts of the earth by British imperialists, then was borne back to the home islands by the waves of post–World War II immigrants. Cricket should, therefore, be just the thing to soothe strained relations between Britain's various "ethnic communities." Such is the hope in the Midlands town of Leicester (rhymes with "jester"). A cricket match has been arranged for, yes, September 11, with local Christian clergy playing against local Muslim imams. A Hindu and an Orthodox Jew will act as umpires. A good time should be had by all, assuming the event is not disrupted by angry mobs of Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Wiccans, animists, and worshippers of Apollo. Smart money will be backing the imams; earlier this year their soccer team humiliated both the Christian clergy and the local police.

■ A Turkish educational publisher, under the stamp of that nation's ministry of education, has issued a schoolroom version of 100 classic children's tales, mostly from Western sources—Heidi, Pinocchio, Tom Sawyer, and so on. There is a twist, though: All these familiar characters have converted to Islam. Instead of inveigling his chums to relieve him of painting chores, Tom Sawyer is applying himself to the memorization of Koranic verses. Pinocchio begs Geppetto to "Give me some bread, for Allah's sake," and so on. Presumably (we confess we have not seen the actual texts) the al-March girls of *Little Women*, suitably burkah-ed, are planning for the Ramadan holiday while Mr. March is away making jihad. Be that as it may, this sort of thing is dynamite in the modern Republic of Turkey. Determinedly secular since its founding in 1923, the Republic at present has a moderate Islamic governing party, and a growing problem with fundamentalist Islam in remote areas. The Turkish government has expressed strong disapproval of the publisher, and the ministry's imprimatur is to be withdrawn.

■ In our last issue we noted the then-ongoing deliberations of the International Astronomical Union over the status of Pluto and various other Solar System bodies that might, or might not, be regarded as true planets, depending on precise definitions. The IAU has now delivered its verdict: Pluto is a "dwarf planet," along with another larger, remoter body, and also the long-known asteroid Ceres (which astronomy buffs insist on referring to as "the world Ceres"). The number of true, non-dwarf, planets is therefore reduced to eight. Down here in the human world, the winners from this decision include fans of composer Gustav Holst, whose *Planets*, first performed in 1918, left out Pluto, on the very sensible grounds that Pluto had not yet been discovered. The seven movements of Holst's suite—he left out Earth, too—are now unimpeachable. Among the losers are conductor Simon Rattle and the Berlin Philharmonic, who recently released a recording of *The Planets* with composer Colin Matthews's Pluto movement, written in 2000, added for the sake of completion. Evidence, perhaps, that the arts should keep the sciences at a wary arm's length.

■ TV naturalist Steve Irwin, familiar to viewers of the Discovery Channel as the "crocodile hunter" in a program thus named, was killed by a stingray while filming off the Great Barrier Reef of his native Australia. Irwin was passionately enthusiastic about animals, especially dangerous ones, or those like his favorite, the hairy-nosed wombat, in danger of extinction. He had a great gift for communicating his enthusiasm to others. He was not, however, stupidly sentimental about animals, like nutty bear-lover Timothy Treadwell, who

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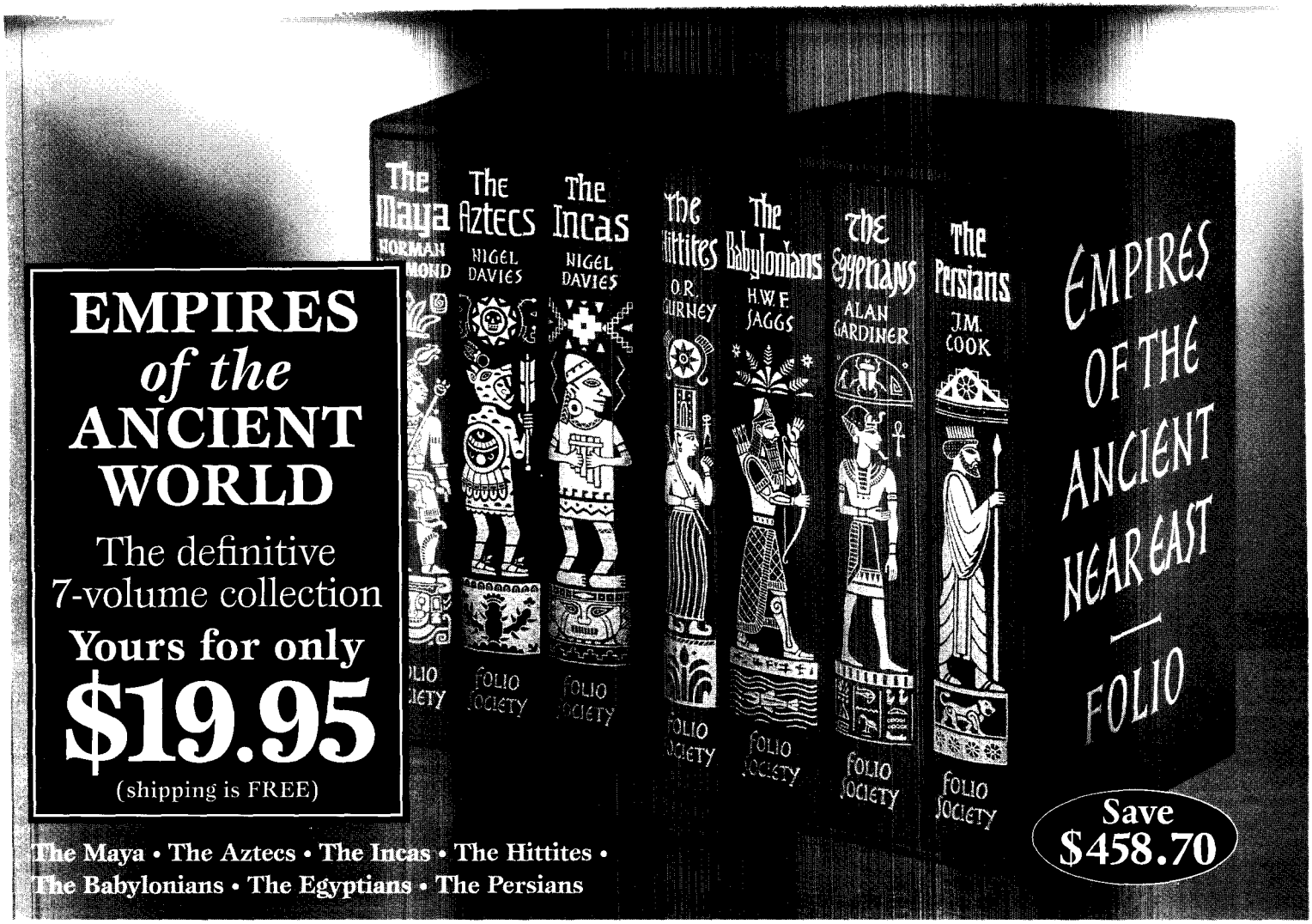

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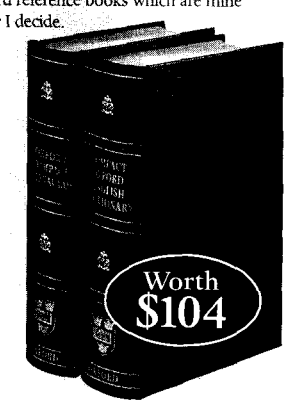

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THE WEEK...

in 2003 was eaten by one of his ursine pals. Nor was Irwin the sort of leftist-environmentalist nag that infests this zone of human activity. To the contrary, he was a political conservative, and a strong supporter of Australia's robustly sensible premier John Howard, whom he once described, to some derision from the Australian media, as "the greatest leader in the entire world." There is no moral to be drawn from this sad event. All that can be said is that Irwin's luck finally ran out; and that a man who knew the cold realities of the natural world as intimately as Irwin did, surely must have suspected that one day it might.

■ Alfred Sherman was an adviser and speechwriter to Mrs. Thatcher, and was thought by many in the Tory inner circle to have played an essential role in helping to formulate her ideas. That same inner circle never quite got over the shocks that Sherman delighted in administering. In appearance, he was frankly undistinguished, and in speech appallingly combative. He had come up the hard way, from the Jewish East End of London via the Communist party. He had fought at the Ebro in the Spanish Civil War and in the British army afterward, and had taken part in the Israeli war of independence. For a while he was an enthusiastic supporter of Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia. The co-founder in 1974 of a think tank, the Centre for Policy Studies, he developed a radical vision of the free market, in a complete reversal of his earlier Communism. Mrs. Thatcher loved argument, and Sherman provided it on her way to revitalizing Britain. He has died at age 86. R.I.P.

POLITICS

A Doused Plame

THINK back, if you will, to the fall of 2003 and the question that consumed Washington: Who leaked the name of Valerie Plame to columnist Robert Novak? The question begat the CIA leak "scandal" and then the CIA leak investigation, which is now, under the direction of prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald, nearing the end of its third year.

But in recent weeks, the entire foundation of the investigation has crumbled. Or, to put it more accurately, we've learned that there never was a foundation for Fitzgerald's take-no-prisoners, send-reporters-to-jail probe.

The news that did such damage to the investigation comes in a new book, *Hubris: The Inside Story of Spin, Scandal, and the Selling of the Iraq War*, by Michael Isikoff and David Corn. *Hubris* reveals that the person who originally leaked to Novak was not an operative of the Bush White House, conspiring to expose Valerie Plame as a CIA agent in order somehow to "smear" her husband, the anti-Bush gadfly Joseph Wilson. Instead, the leaker was Richard Armitage, the former number two at the State Department and close confidant of former secretary of state Colin Powell.

The news lays waste to the notion that Vice President Dick Cheney, former Cheney chief of staff Lewis Libby, and top White House aide Karl Rove conspired to "out" Plame. Armitage and Powell were, you'll remember, determined antagonists of the Cheney crowd. The idea that they would be part of any Cheney conspiracy is ridiculous.

But perhaps the most disturbing part of the new revelations is that Justice Department investigators knew Armitage was the leaker by mid-October 2003. He told them himself. And Rove told them that he, too, had talked to Novak. So in that month, October 2003, the Justice Department knew the answer to the burning "Who told Novak?" question.

Who is to blame? Armitage. Powell. Ashcroft. Comey. Fitzgerald. Schumer. The New York Times, *which cried loudest for an investigation. The lefties who called Rove a 'traitor.'*

So why was there any CIA leak investigation at all? Start with the political pressure applied by Democrats such as Charles Schumer, who demanded a probe and would surely have cried cover-up if the administration had announced it had looked into the matter and decided no crime was committed. But also add political cowardice in the Justice Department. Faced with Schumer's demands, then–attorney general John Ashcroft recused himself and tossed the hot potato to deputy James Comey, who later tossed it to his friend Fitzgerald, who then called Rove and dozens of others in front of a grand jury multiple times and devised novel ways to force reporters to testify about their sources. From it all, Fitzgerald got one indictment, of Libby, not for any underlying crime, but on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice.

And while Fitzgerald worked, did the Justice Department expend equal energy on investigating the leaks that have truly damaged national security, such as the "secret prisons" story, the NSA wiretap revelations, and the leak exposing the program to monitor terrorist finance? No. Have you seen the reporters involved being called before a grand jury? No.

Today, with those deadly serious leaks unsolved, it is the Plame investigation that plods on and on. Who is to blame? Armitage. Powell. Ashcroft. Comey. Fitzgerald. Schumer. The *New York Times*, which cried loudest for an investigation. The lefties who called Rove a "traitor."

Blame them all. They deserve it. And one other thing: This pointless investigation should be stopped now.

AT WAR

Nearing Midnight

THE U.N. Security Council's deadline for Iran to stop enriching uranium has passed, but the centrifuges at Natanz are still spinning. That Iran defied the deadline should surprise no one. What does surprise us is that the president who swore he would not "permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons" does not show more urgency in fulfilling that pledge.

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The U.S. is holding off on seeking sanctions through the U.N. while European negotiators make a last-ditch effort to sweet-talk the mullahs into pacifism. That might be worth a try if they hadn't spent the last four years trying it. Coming now, it's simply a display of weakness. If the Security Council were worth its name, Iran would have seen, at the moment of the deadline's expiry, a resolution authorizing tough punitive measures. Instead, it sees a Security Council incapable of anything but fruitless and feckless diplomacy, and a United States apparently resolved to this irresolution.

An oil blockade could hurt the regime, but it is also a diplomatic impossibility. And Russia and China will refuse to support even modest sanctions. Russia in particular has hundreds of millions of dollars at stake in the construction of an Iranian nuclear reactor. Both nations promised the U.S. that they would back sanctions if Iran failed to halt enrichment—and show not the slightest intention of keeping their word.

We would be fools to take comfort in a recent International Atomic Energy Agency report suggesting that Iran's enrichment activities are proceeding slowly and producing uranium of a quality too low for weaponization. Given enough time, the regime will build its nukes. The paramount mission of the Bush administration in its remaining two years should therefore be twofold: to keep the mullahs from going nuclear, and to speed their fall from power. Unfortunately, these objectives do not admit of a single solution. We should redouble our aid to the Iranian democracy movement, but we cannot assume that the revolution will come before the bomb.

Stopping the bomb will require us instead to hasten the diplomacy to its inglorious denouement and think very seriously about our military options. A preemptive air strike is a nasty thing to contemplate. The mullahs could retaliate against us in Iraq. They could sabotage tanker shipments in the Persian Gulf. They could back terrorist attacks on U.S. soil. But the alternative—a nuclear Iran—is vastly worse. Even if the mullahs never used their arsenal, its simple existence would deal a catastrophic blow to U.S. interests. It would effectively give Tehran a veto over U.S. military action in the region. Since the nuclear facilities are protected by the Revolutionary Guard—rabid ideologues who operate with a high degree of autonomy—a weapon could conceivably be transferred to terrorists without the central government's okay. And an Iranian bomb would likely produce a regional arms race and multiply the number of Middle Eastern nuclear powers. This too would raise the likelihood of a nuclear weapon's falling into terrorist hands; and by making it harder to determine where a detonated bomb had originated and retaliate against the guilty party, it would give the jihad that much more incentive to push the button.

Bush has made forfending that possibility his presidency's raison d'être. We believe he means it. But we wonder how much longer he will wait before abandoning "solutions" that are anything but.

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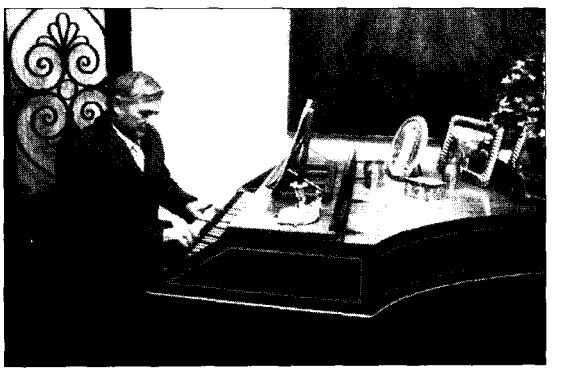
OBITUARY

Jan Lukas, R.I.P.

I RECALL sitting one day at my desk with two stacks of photographs by Jan Lukas in front of me. On one side was a collection of representative views taken by Lukas during the twenty years of his liberty; on the other side, the previous week's routine photos, shot at the studio on 23rd Street where *Firing Line* was usually filmed. The former, which would make up his new book, *The Islanders*, were, as one would expect a special selection to be, spectacular examples of the photographer's art. The latter were his workaday stuff. But as I stared at those half-dozen pictures I was reminded that the workaday stuff of a serious artist is almost always taken for granted, but then so is the workaday stuff of nature, like the dazzling light changes on the Long Island Sound just down the slope from where I was sitting.

There, in one photograph in the current stack, was *Firing Line*'s director, Warren Steibel, tieless as usual, huge of dimension, wearing glasses, his lips framed to convey that he had just given out a no-nonsense order to the crew. The three guests were seated, the first a venerable journalist, a student of the Soviet Union—in the photograph he is peering at the director, amused, curious; the second, a young, bright iconoclast, dyspeptically British—he was just a little bit ill-at-ease, his head cocked down as if contemplating his approach to the program about to begin; the third, an English poet-historian, ice-calm: He had done his work, and now he would transcribe his thoughts for us. And in moments we would all be discussing, and then viewing, the documentary *Harvest of Despair*, a record of the great tribulation imposed on the Ukraine by Josef Stalin when Jan Lukas was seventeen years old.



Portrait of WFB by Jan Lukas

Lukas was born in Prague in 1915, when it was still part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Three years later Czechoslovakia became an independent country, plucked from the ravages of World War I, the first installment of the awful ugliness of the 20th century.

Jan Lukas was not in the Ukraine to photograph the starvation of a dozen million people, and though artistically it is a risk to say such a thing, I am glad that he was not, as I would not wish for so graphic a registering of one more tragedy, however singular—he would see quite enough.

But Lukas was a professional voyeur, and history paraded right outside his window, great, hideous hunks of history. He was twenty-three when the Nazis put an end to the short-lived freedom of the fledgling republic he grew up in. He was in his early thirties when the Communists staged the coup that aborted the freedom briefly experienced by Czechoslovakia after the liberation. There came, five years later, the death of Stalin, followed by a brief liberalization; but this was cut short when, next door in Hungary, the Soviet tanks trampled the students, reminding Eastern Europe that satellization was viewed by the Soviet Union as a permanent transaction. Jan Lukas, by then a renowned photographer whose work was intermittently censored, began at that point to plot his escape, a cumbersome matter, involving as it did his wife and two daughters. This deliverance was effected in 1965, and after spending ten months as a refugee in Naples, he came to New York—which city, he told his friends, he intended never to leave.

Jan Lukas was a retiring man of gentle natural manners, and so it is unlikely that he was ever himself, personally or even professionally, strident or harsh or scurrilous: he left it to his lenses to express what his inner eye saw, his lenses serving as his pencil, as his brush and palette.

He caught immediately the special qualities of New York, the circus of getting-and-spending and foolishness and gaiety and spirit; the love of country and tolerance of variety. He photographed the proud, determined whore in the rain; the young, hirsute musician squatting on the pavement of a busy street playing on a Casio synthesizer the 18th Prelude of Johann Sebastian Bach. In his collection we see pictures of people and scenes which we have seen before—we must have seen them, we tell ourselves, so recognizable are they; but we did not really see them, in most cases, until now. We are brought to them by this sensitive cicerone who captures all scenes—grotesque, serene, disruptive, routine—with his camera, creating the most striking photographs I have ever seen.

My tribute is not casually given. I was for 35 years professionally in charge of what went on the cover of *National Review*, and I placed there, over the years, more than one hundred photographs by Jan Lukas. Sometimes (I confess this now), I invented a cover theme merely for the sake of reproducing a particular photograph of Jan Lukas which I simply could not bear to go one more fortnight without reproducing, such is the hold he had, and still has, on my own eye.

Jan Lukas was never quite visible when he took pictures, so comprehensive was his self-effacement. For one thing, he never used a flash bulb. Never never ever ever, it did not matter how dark the room, how inhospitable the lighting. This brought to his indoor pictures a distinctive naturalness, a softness that animated the features and expressions of the men and women he recorded, rescuing them unmistakably from the tendency to Madame Tussaud-ism that inheres in so many photographs in which the lighting arrangements are artificial. Jan Lukas, in my opinion, was the best photo portraitist of our time, using candid photography.

In 1991, two years after the liberation of his native country, he was invited to Prague for the opening of a museum exhibit of his fine work. Currently, his series "New York–Pompeii" (black-and-white prints for Pompeii, color for Manhattan) is on display in the gardens of Prague Castle.

He died on August 28 in his beloved New York, and I record with gratitude what he did for *National Review* and *Firing Line*.

—WFB

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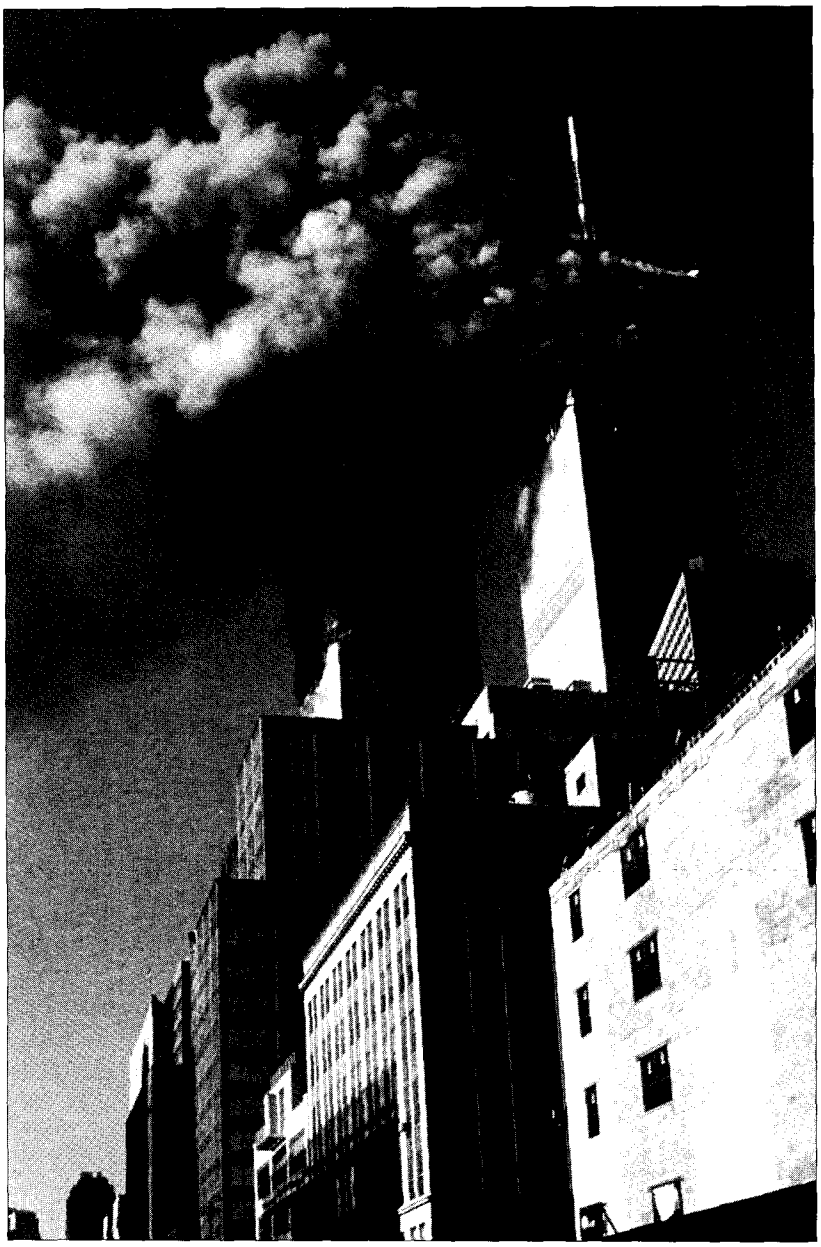

■ 9/11 ■

The War upon Us

Reflections five years later

RICHARD BROOKHISER

I KNEW, from the first week after 9/11, possibly the first day, that I was seeing the rest of my life. The suddenness of my conviction was due to a big thing (the shock of being in Manhattan, watching the Trade Towers smoke and smelling them after they fell) and a small thing (the fact that I happened to be reading Winston Churchill's *Marlborough: His Life and Times*, which, whatever its limitations as history or biography, accustoms you to long wars). The circumstances, as they became clearer over the months and years, bore the conviction out. Islamic fascism is a cult watered by frustration and cultivated by political actors, mostly Saudi and Iranian, with access to immense wealth. None of these factors will change easily.

Here are some aspects of what we have seen for the last five years, and may well see for the next few decades. I am not analyzing the early campaigns, or predicting new ones, only trying to describe our world.

Older Americans remember, and their children romanticize, the national unity of World War II—the good war, fought by the greatest generation. These feelings characterized every major American war from 1898 to 1950. Quarrels occurred before and after the fighting, but while it lasted we pulled together. Such unity, however, was an aberration in our history. The American Revolution and the Civil War were civil wars; the War of 1812 almost became one. Even the Mexican War was opposed by an angry minority, including John Quincy Adams and Abraham Lincoln. Vietnam returned us to the norm. After 9/11 everyone put out flags, and the Taliban regime fell so quickly there was hardly time for protest, though R.W. Apple raised the flag of quagmire. Now that we have quagmire indeed, the gloves are off. The latest masterpiece of rancor is *Death of a President*, the TV movie that begins with the assassination of President Bush. *Death of a President* is British (it comes from the digital arm of Channel 4) but it will find an audience here.

Our goal, besides weathering the din, must be to hate each other as little as possible. The consequences of indulging hatred can be studied in *Suite Française*, an unfinished novel about the fall of France by Irene Nemirovsky, a Jewish author murdered in Auschwitz. Everyone in her story—rich, middle-class, poor—dislikes everyone else, even more, at times, than they dislike the Germans. America could not sink so low—we haven't been hating for a century and a half—but we need a measure of sanity if only because a long series of wars will have to be commanded by both Republicans and Democrats. When each party is on the outs, it will attack the other for political advantage—a base

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motive, but possibly hopeful too, since when the carper wins office his views may change.

What's that smell? Is it anti-Semitism? For someone who moved to New York almost 30 years ago, the current position of Jews and Israel is astonishing. Late-'70s New York—and therefore the intellectual and media world—was a playground for Jewry. Everything Jews thought, wrote, or did was cool. Now "neocon" means "hook-nosed warmonger" (Bush, Cheney, and Rumsfeld are not hook-nosed, of course, but wasn't it ever the neocon's way to use front men?). Israel is called, not in *Pravda* or *al-Ahram*, but by France's ambassador to Britain, the "shitty little country." Anti-Semitism has the appeal of the shortcut, in the moments when we wonder if we couldn't end it all by just giving the enemy what it wants. It is a delusive shortcut, since the enemy wants so much more than Tel Aviv. Anti-Semitism in this country is not likely to reach the levels of Europe or the Middle East; there are too many evangelicals here for that. Instead it will be confined to academics, diplomats, and journalists.

It will be impossible to control the press either by imposing secrecy or appealing to patriotism. Some of the press wants American defeat, or jihadist victory (different, if related, desires). Most of it wants all stories, all the time. When Indian nationalists asked George Bernard Shaw what they could do to throw off the British yoke, he told them, Do their work better. Frivolous advice to the Indians perhaps; the only possible advice to supporters of the Terror War. If the press is ignoring certain stories, then other outlets have to push them: Blogs are a great help. Meanwhile the government has to communicate, fight for the language, present a counter narrative. Above all it must do everything it can to introduce the vexing institution of journalism into the Middle East. We live in Babel; the ordinary Muslim lives in a loudspeaker that tells him what he wants to hear, or what his masters want him to hear. The best treatment for the ills that the press causes in free countries is universal infection.

Dealing with all these problems, day in, year out, stimulates the vice of impatience. We think of it as an American vice, but it is even more the failing of verbalists. Come home, America; rubble is no trouble: Such notions are what Lionel Trilling, in another context, called "irritable mental gestures." We can neither destroy the people and places that give rise to our problems, nor wash our hands of them. Take a good look at them. They will be with us for a long time.

Our institutions and our emotions are one thing. What about other peoples'? Start with our friends—and our "friends." In another multi-volume opus, Churchill wrote grandiloquently of the Grand Alliance—Britain, America, and the Soviet Union—that crushed the Axis. But look again at that alliance. America did not formally join the war until we were attacked by Japan. The Soviets were in it from Day One—on the other side. By war's end the three allies were already drifting apart, as Hitler foresaw they would (not soon enough to save him, fortunately). But such stresses are a quality of all coalitions. The grander an alliance, the less it accomplishes. For the Gulf War George H.W. Bush and James Baker assembled a coalition that included France, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, all blessed by the U.N. As a result, the war stopped with the liberation of Kuwait. (The first Bush team had its own doubts about toppling Saddam, but if it had overcome them, it would have had to act much more on its own.) In the run-up to the Iraq War, the limitations were front-loaded: France, Germany, and Turkey refused their help, as did Vladimir Putin, whose soul George W. Bush had once discerned in his eye.

The modern world can be chaotic and threatening. It sucks people away from home; it finds home, and changes it. But there are no refuges.

Yet there are gains as well as losses. After throwing out the corrupt and anti-American Liberals—and experiencing its own terror scare—Canada is a more gung-ho country. India, thanks to the diplomacy of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, has become America's friend, just in time for its rendezvous with superpower status. Most astonishing of all, perhaps, is Pakistan. Yes, A. Q. Khan armed the world from his back door, and Osama bin Laden may be hiding there. But considering how deeply implicated Pakistan was in supporting the infrastructure of jihadism, its post-9/11 turnaround is almost miraculous.

The great unknowable of the Terror War is the mind of the Muslim Middle East, and its diaspora in Europe and America. Is there anything we can offer potential enemies to prevent them from becoming actual ones?

"Eventually," said George W. Bush in his second inaugural, "the call of freedom comes to every mind and every soul." Even with the adverb, this is too sweeping, as Bush's enemies, from multiculturalists to Tory skeptics, delight in pointing out. But the reality-based community overshoots in its turn when it denies that general statements can be made about men. Men want three things. They want to live, they want not to be oppressed themselves, and they want, most subtly, to be recognized. (John Adams, following Adam Smith, wrote that the worst thing about poverty is invisibility: The poor man "is not disapproved, censured, or reproached; *he is only not seen.*")

These desires can conflict. At times, men fly to slavery to escape annihilation. At other times, they die for liberty. At still other times, they sacrifice life or freedom for recognition, donning uniforms, monk's habits, or explosive belts so that their world or their god will honor them. Even covering the face with a veil can be a bid for attention.

The modern world can be chaotic and threatening. It sucks people away from home; it finds home, and changes it. But there are no refuges. Islamic fascism claims to restore the caliphate or the 12th imam, but is itself a modernist reaction, offering glory here and hereafter, along with death and discipline. But the reaction is unnecessary. We have to know that the modern world not only offers a better solution to the problems of scarcity and politics; it lets men be themselves: all men, not just the elect; for all their lives, not one murderous blast. If we know that, maybe we can say it and show it. **NR**

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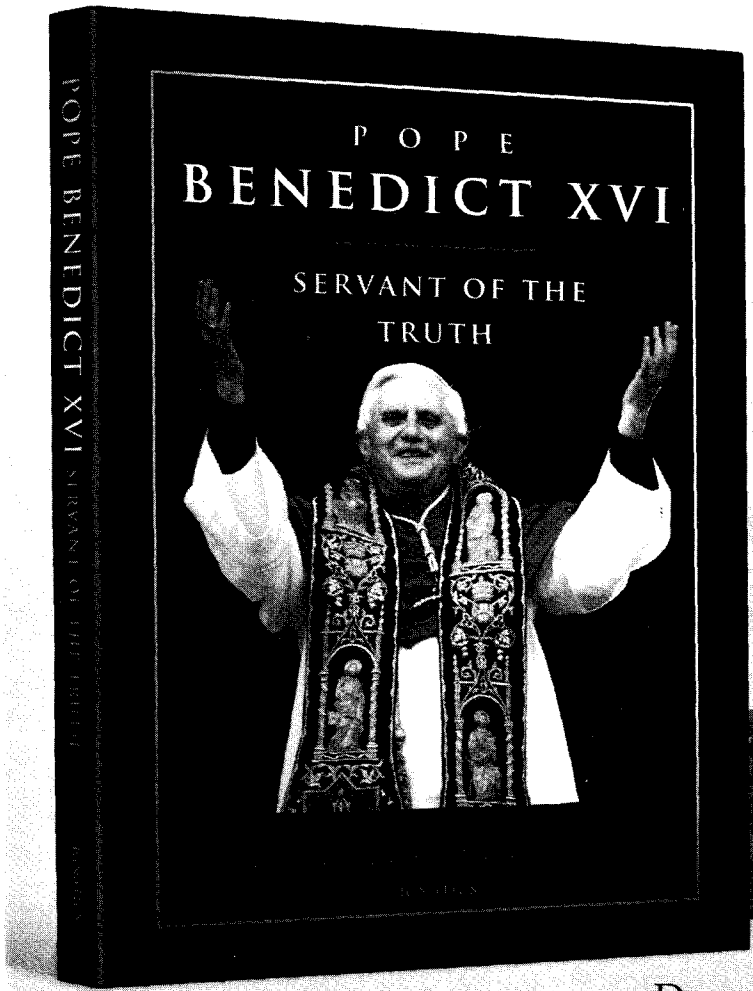

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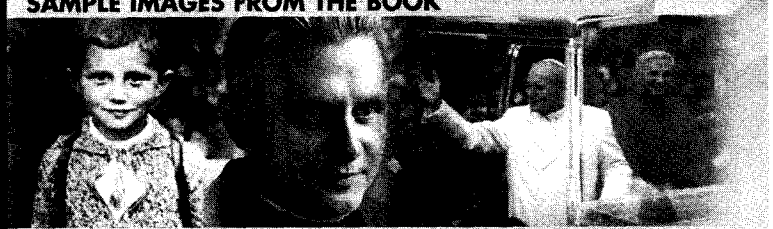

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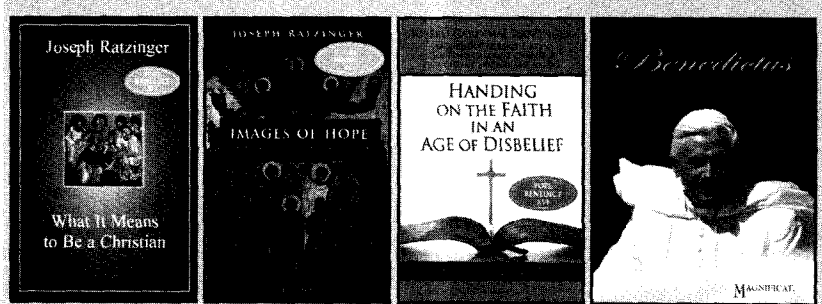

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■ THE NATION

Katrina's 'Secrets'

They're not what liberals think

JOHN H. McWHORTER

KATRINA, we are told, is all about "secrets." Legions of thinkers have discovered in last year's hurricane an invaluable opportunity to preach a precious hidden wisdom on black urban history—a subject they eternally rue Joe Barstool's ignorance of. It's what I call their "Sociology 101": the lesson that the reason so many black people are poor is a tragic cocktail of economic factors and white neglect that hit roughly between Eisenhower and Ford.

So: The poor black New Orleanians huddled last summer in the Superdome were done in when low-skill jobs left the city. The departure of middle-class blacks from the Lower Ninth Ward left poor blacks without role models. Crack cocaine was so cheap that young black men could not resist selling it instead of looking for legal jobs.

But the problem with this supposed wisdom is that it just doesn't hold water. Poor Chinese immigrants, starting in the late 1800s, were rigorously confined to small urban districts, and yet these were never anything like the New Orleans black ghettoes in terms of violence, unemployment, or out-of-wedlock births.

Despite the exodus of factory jobs from inner cities, immigrants have coped in the same neighborhoods by making their living in other ways: opening small businesses, driving cabs, and so on.

And a white middle-class Scarsdale kid could make more money selling drugs than in most other careers he might choose instead—but drug sales have not become a substitute economy in such towns. The difference between the ghetto black male who drifts into selling crack and the white Scarsdale kid who could not imagine doing so is a matter of what is considered normal in their respective communities.

The people arguing for Sociology 101 think that to stray beyond this liturgy can only mean assailing black people as somehow unfit: "black bashing." However, it is Sociology 101 that is "black bashing," in insisting that only the descendants of African slaves are incapable of making lemons out of lemonade as so many others do.

For example, in New Orleans, by the time Katrina hit, poor blacks had been coping with America's tilted playing field better and better over the past decade. In 1990, four times as many black families were living on welfare in New Orleans than were on the welfare rolls in 2002. However, this was because of the removal of the real reason so many blacks were so poor in places like New Orleans: In 1996, welfare was recast from a program paying people to have children into a job-training program with a five-year cap. The old "welfare as we know it" was a vast transformation in the late Sixties of a program originally intended for widows. It deep-sixed what had once been struggling but stable communities. Soon came the lawless black inner cities now so familiar, where barely anyone had a real father, working 9 to 5 was a sometime thing, and heedless boys killed one another in drug-trade turf wars.

The Sixties welfare ideology included a fashionable new Black Power component, which fostered the idea that subscribing to the White Man's norms was not "really black." Naturally, more black men felt less shame in living outside the law than before: Heroin was hardly unknown in black ghettoes in the old days and was priced accessibly, but did not become a staple grocery.

To treat it as a puzzle that black communities fell apart when hit by "welfare as we know it" and "Kill Whitey" is like wondering what happened on a charred lot where only a chimney stands, refusing to consider that fire burned the house down—and insisting, instead, that the house must have fallen apart gradually because of heat, wind, and rain.

So, what Dan Baum in *The New Yorker* has described as the "obesity and missing teeth, the raggedness and strange English" of so many Katrina victims on TV screens last year was a snapshot of a community just nine years past a 30-year public-policy carjacking. The catastrophe is only of true value to the race discussion if we understand that this, and not Sociology 101, was a "secret" Katrina revealed.

The received wisdom is that poor blacks had been "ignored" until they turned up on TV in the Superdome. "These citizens' plight had been ignored by the government and the national media for decades," Baum continued. But come now—the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977, the CETA jobs program, the national debate after the Rodney King riots, Enterprise Zones, workfare, Bill Clinton's National Dialogue on Race, welfare reform, No Child Left Behind, the Faith-Based and Charity Initiatives—can we really pretend that Katrina is showing us that America has "ignored" black poverty?

What Katrina revealed was the result of one especially unsuccessful attempt to address black poverty: 30 years of teaching poor black people not to work for a living.

The real "secret" Katrina has uncovered is the depths of spiritual self-doubt in the hearts of a tragic number of even successful black people, at a time when there are more middle-class black families than poor ones. Over the year since Katrina, I have encountered countless black panelists, talk-show hosts, and callers-in who consider it an unassailable fact that Katrina was "all about racism."

The truth is that FEMA, in its disarray, would have had trouble handling a water-main break in Hoboken, much less a hurricane in New Orleans. I find it entirely plausible that if a hurricane had hit Newport, R.I., instead, FEMA would have been equally unequal to the rescue task. One would think that 9/11 would suffice as proof: Al-Qaeda had been waging war for a decade, but the federal government didn't take it seriously enough until the day of disaster.

But many black people, despite obsessively covered counterevidence such as this, are utterly unable to imagine that the Bush administration could be inattentive to middle-class whites as well. They can

Mr. McWhorter is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, and the author most recently of *Winning the Race: Beyond the Crisis in Black America.*

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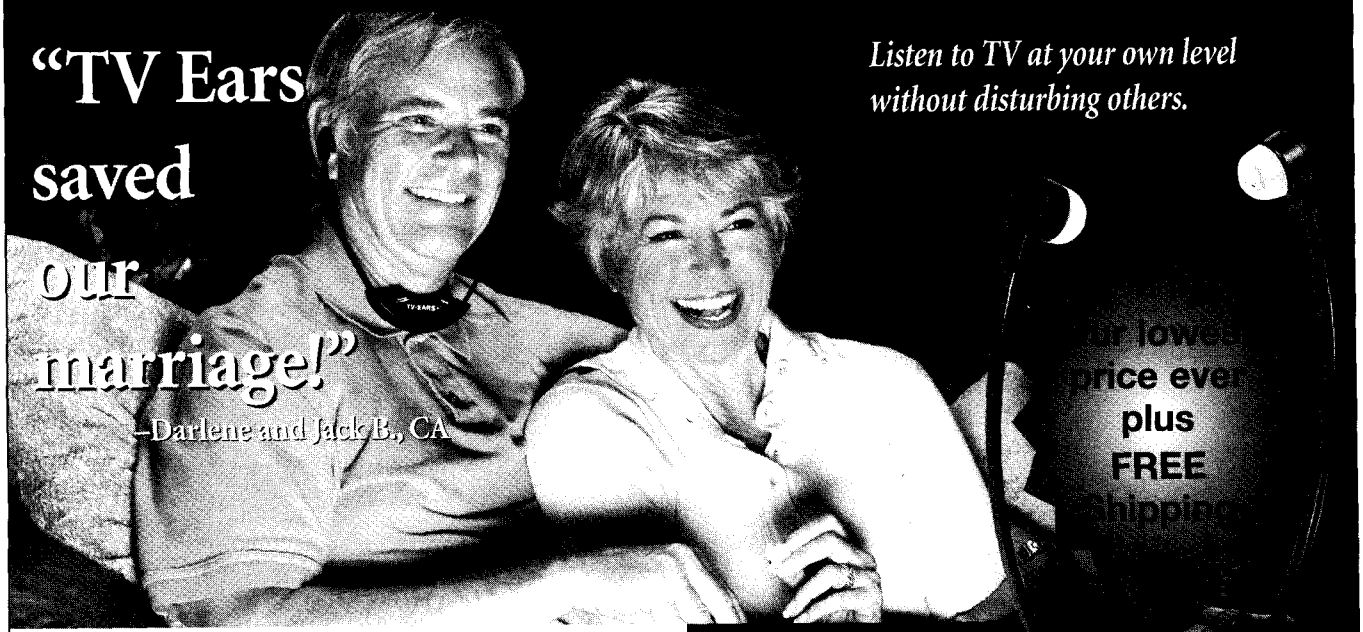

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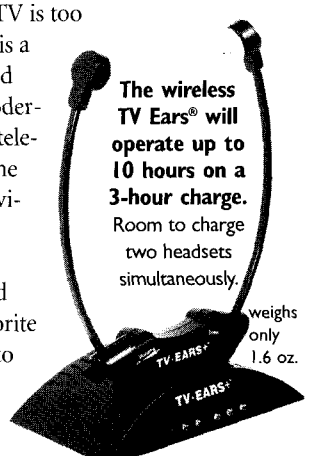

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see Katrina only in personal, racial terms. Early this year *The Journal of Black Psychology* published a study showing that black people who perceive racism as a significant problem in their lives tend also to exhibit signs of paranoia. People given to seeing Katrina as "all about" racism are examples of the legacy that slavery and Jim Crow left to the black American psyche—a gnawing sense of inadequacy, which seeks compensation in the status of the noble victim. Another secret Katrina reveals, then, is that behind the rhetorical gusto in charges that Katrina was about racism lies profound insecurity.

The eager acceptance of Sociology 101 and its supposed demonstration by Katrina is itself rooted in self-doubt. Too often in black discourse, it is treated as some kind of victory to insist that blacks cannot compete. Even if Sociology 101 held up to examination, one would think black people would avoid embracing it out of pride, as families deny alcoholism or suicide in their histories—or as blacks are often reluctant to face the fact that most African slaves were sold to Europeans by African middlemen.

After all, upon what logical or moral authority can we stipulate that black Americans are the only group in human history for whom initiative must be treated as a dirty word? A common answer is that as involuntary immigrants brought here on slave ships, we cannot be expected to have the initiative that, say, Caribbean and African voluntary immigrants have. The problem is that legions of perfectly functional and/or successful black people disprove the idea that history has left blacks devoid of initiative. Most groups would take pride in that, and would viscerally resist the notion that there was something inherent in their group that made them unable to deal with the fact that life is unfair. They would search for other explanations as to why a segment of their people had lagged behind.

To embrace powerlessness as a group definition is, as human psychology goes, odd: It makes sense only among people who do not feel whole inside. For me, the most awful thing about Katrina has been watching innocent poor people having to pick up the pieces of their lives. But the second most awful thing has been watching so much of the black commentariat making it so clear that they have, as it is put in the Halls of Ivy, internalized the views of the oppressor—that is, Bull Connor got to them.

At one of the innumerable convocations on Hurricane Katrina over the past year, a panelist black or white has needed only to utter the term "societal racism" to get applause—as if saying that and then going upstairs for wine and cheese were what the civil-rights revolution had been for. But we get nowhere if we let Katrina teach us that racism is all there is to attend to in poor blacks' past, present, or future. Yes, racism exists. No, the playing field is not completely level. But it never will be, and history records no group that made the best of itself with the mantra, "We're not up to it." **NR**

JIM YOUNG/REUTERS

One year later

■ **POLITICS**

Hatin' That Store

What Democrats think Wal-Mart can do for them

BYRON YORK

"If that's not a winning message, then I don't know politics." Chris Kofinis is talking by cellphone from Salem, Ore., where his organization, Wake Up Wal-Mart, is conducting a rally against the nation's largest retailer. Kofinis, a former political-science teacher at Cal State who left academia to join Wesley Clark's run for the White House, believes campaigning against Wal-Mart over its allegedly unfair labor practices will be a big winner for Democrats this November—and an even bigger winner in the 2008 presidential race. "The debate about Wal-Mart is a national debate about corporate responsibility, about health care, about the role of China," Kofinis says. "This is the beginning of a debate that is going to hit a high point in '07 and '08."

Not long ago, the notion that attacking Wal-Mart was smart politics was somewhat quixotic, found mostly in union offices and on left-wing websites. Today, it's mainstream Democratic doctrine. On August 17, the *New York Times* ran a front-page story headlined "Eye on Election, Democrats Run as Wal-Mart Foe." Democratic candidates across the country, the paper reported, "have found a new rallying cry that many of them say could prove powerful in the midterm elections and into 2008: denouncing Wal-Mart for what they say are substandard wages and health care benefits."

Among the Democrats who have joined the anti-Wal-Mart crusade are Sen. Joe Biden, Sen. Evan Bayh, Iowa governor Tom Vilsack, New Mexico governor Bill Richardson, former senator John Edwards—that's a bunch of presidential hopefuls right there—along with members of Congress such as Rosa DeLauro, John

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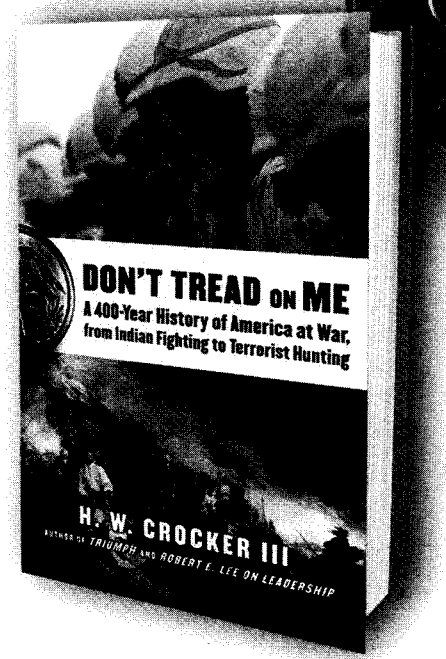
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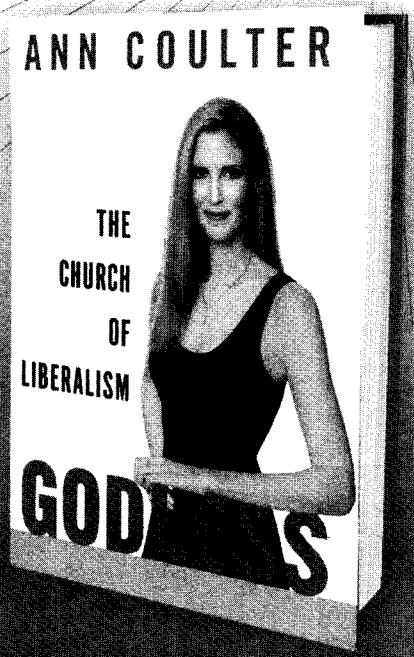

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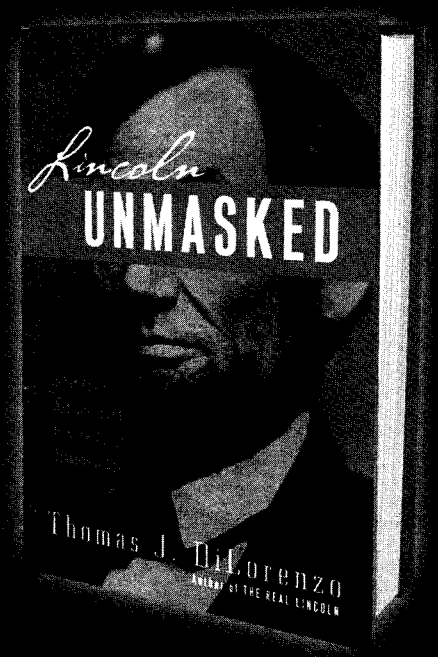

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Conyers, Sherrod Brown, and Nancy Kaptur. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, who was on Wal-Mart's board of directors back in her Arkansas days, last year returned a $5,000 contribution from the company. Opposition to Wal-Mart even brought the bitter antagonists Sen. Joe Lieberman and Ned Lamont to the same rally in Connecticut.

In all, Wake Up Wal-Mart staged 35 rallies in 19 states in the weeks leading up to Labor Day. The group's staffers, like Kofinis, traveled around the country in a 45-foot bus emblazoned with the slogans 2006 CHANGE WAL-MART, CHANGE AMERICA TOUR and JOIN AMERICA'S FIGHT FOR HEALTH CARE. The bus spent a lot of time in Iowa—the tour stopped in Cedar Rapids, Des Moines (twice), Davenport, Waterloo, Iowa City, and Council Bluffs—where Democratic presidential candidates are hanging out these days.

The substance of the anti-Wal-Mart charges heard at the rallies and elsewhere has been hashed out many times. Attacked by the Left for years, Wal-Mart has pretty effectively rebutted accusations that it destroys communities, pays substandard wages, forces states to pay for the health care of its workers, and generally behaves worse than other big-box retailers. What has changed recently is that some Democrats believe the public is now eager to hear their message.

"You see real anger among Republicans, Democrats, independents," says Kofinis, describing the Wake Up Wal-Mart rallies. "They see themselves being sacrificed to serve the interests of a very small group of individuals."

Perhaps some do, but how many? Last December, the non-partisan Pew Research Center polled 1,502 Americans—a substantial survey size—and found that most people just don't feel that way. In fact, they seem to like Wal-Mart.

While 53 percent of people who described themselves as liberal Democrats said they have an unfavorable opinion of Wal-Mart, 70 percent of those who called themselves conservative or moderate Democrats had a favorable impression of the company. So did 65 percent of independents, and 73 percent of Republicans.

On other aspects of Wal-Mart's business, 53 percent of liberal Democrats agreed with the statement that Wal-Mart is "a bad place to work." But majorities of everybody else—57 percent of conservative and moderate Democrats, 56 percent of independents, and 64 percent of Republicans—said Wal-Mart is a good place to work.

And on the basic question of whether Wal-Mart is good or bad for the country, a plurality of liberal Democrats—44 percent—told Pew that the company has a bad effect on the United States. But solid majorities of everybody else—64 percent of conservative and moderate Democrats, 67 percent of independents, and 71 percent of Republicans—think Wal-Mart has a good effect on the country. The bottom line is that liberal Democrats—and virtually nobody else—believe Wal-Mart is bad for America.

It stands to reason that Wal-Mart might be an issue in internal Democratic power struggles. But on the campaign trail?

How does one make a winning campaign out of that? "This one eludes me completely," says a Democratic strategist who asked to remain anonymous. "All these guys who make $200,000 a year and live in Washington think it's a bad idea for Wal-Mart to save their customers thousands of dollars a year. Sometimes our party is more interested in punishing those who have gotten ahead than it is in helping those who could really use a hand up."

Attacking Wal-Mart now is a particularly bad strategy, adds David Winston, a pollster who has worked with many top Republicans. "In an environment where the cost of living has turned into a significant issue—health care, gas prices—to then go after a business that provides lower-income people with the ability to buy goods at a price they can afford is an interesting approach to politics," Winston says wryly.

So why are all those Democratic candidates joining the anti-Wal-Mart crusade? Because they are likely listening more to their union supporters—a critical part of any Democratic coalition—than to the majority of voters.

Wake Up Wal-Mart is the creation of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, which has been in ugly organizing battles with Wal-Mart in California and elsewhere. A number of studies purporting to show Wal-Mart's negative effects on the economy have been produced by unions like the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). And the unions have attacked Wal-Mart in other ways as well, such as by promoting last year's documentary *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*.

Those same unions play a big role in picking the next Democratic nominee for president. And service unions in particular—the kind that would like to organize Wal-Mart workers—are on the ascent. "In presidential politics, there are two labor organizations that matter," explains the anonymous Democratic strategist. "One is the Service Employees International Union, and the other is the [old-line] AFL-CIO, and SEIU now matters more than AFL-CIO. And for SEIU, this is the way to drive membership. If they could ever organize Wal-Mart employees, they would be bigger and stronger than ever. That's the play."

It stands to reason that Wal-Mart might be an issue in internal Democratic power struggles. But on the campaign trail? Some Democrats seem to have forgotten that the stores, with their millions and millions of customers, are everywhere. There are more than 3,800 Wal-Marts in the United States, meaning that there is no state and virtually no congressional district without a Wal-Mart. In the Pew poll, even liberal Democrats (62 percent) characterized Wal-Mart as a "good place to shop."

But there is no Wal-Mart in Hollywood. There is no Wal-Mart on the Upper East Side or Upper West Side of Manhattan—indeed, in all of New York City. There is no Wal-Mart in Washington, D.C. The political classes who live in those places, and who have perhaps a disproportionate effect on the thinking of some Democratic candidates, have no regular, firsthand contact with the company. So they think going after Wal-Mart will be a big boost for them. Sooner or later, they're likely to learn otherwise. **NR**

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■ AT WAR

The Center Holding

Strength in the Iraqi government

MARIO LOYOLA

Not many people are optimistic about the future of Iraq these days. The centrifugal forces threatening to tear the country apart are plain to see. And yet, beneath the surface, the forces impelling Iraq toward the consolidation of central authority are strong and getting stronger. Even under fire, Iraq's democracy is steadily gathering momentum.

There are only so many paths Iraq can take. The central government might collapse in civil war or insurrection; or it might be vulnerable to a fascist-type electoral takeover, with Iran playing a major role. But none of these possibilities is very likely, and the government continues to secure its power. Its success will depend on the scope of the services it provides and the strength of its institutions, as well as the failure of its enemies to unify and reach critical mass.

The scope of the central government's activities remains frightfully tiny. Its finances rest essentially on a few rusty oil pipelines, and it lacks even the administrative means to spend effectively what money it has. The predictable result is that it is essentially absent in most of Iraq. But this problem is not getting worse. On the contrary, Iraq's bureaucracy develops apace.

In the meantime, militias have filled the vacuum. They have become a quasi-government in Kurdistan, which controls its own oil revenue, and where the *peshmerga*—as large as all other Iraqi militias put together—have established central authority. The Sunni militias are weakest, waging disorganized insurgence against the coalition and terrorism against the Shiites. Most important have been the Shiite militias, a patchwork of groups that have assumed Hezbollah's strategy of providing both social services and security. In Baghdad's Sadr City, for example, one needs a license from Moqtada al-Sadr's office to conduct many business transactions. And because Shiite organizations control the mosques—and the huge stream of religious tithes—they have flexible and well-funded budgets.

The Shiite militias are now the source of much of the violence in Baghdad, but commentators have greatly exaggerated the long-term danger they pose. They arose not in opposition to the national army, as happened in Lebanon in the 1970s, but alongside it. And the militias are so numerous, varied, and small (as militias go) that no single one is in any position to dominate the others.

For all their divisions, the Shiites have one very important thing in common: their overwhelming interest in defending Iraq's democracy. They are the majority in the country, and democracy has allowed them at long last to assert majority rule. They may have accepted Kurdish autonomy, but it is inconceivable that they would accept the outright secession of the Kurdish or Sunni provinces. This is why even the most radical of the militia leaders have consistently called for national unity and none has advanced an anti-democratic agenda. Indeed, what nobody seems to have considered is that Iraq's Shiite leaders—even the radical ones—might actually have every intention of making the democratic experiment work.

Baghdad is not safe for anybody, including government officials. But for all the violence there, very little of it is directed against the government. Clashes with the security forces have occurred most often when they have sought to impose their authority on militia-held areas. A recent Pentagon report attributes most of the violence in Iraq to a cycle of revenge attacks that pit Sunni terrorists against Shiite death squads. No Shiite militia has openly challenged the central government, and even Sadr—himself a source of grave concern—has ordered his Mahdi Army, now perhaps 20,000 strong, not to attack coalition troops. It is confined mostly to Sadr City, and all its attempts to expand, both politically and geographically, have been resisted by other Shiite militias.

In the absence of pervasive central authority, the Shiite militias have begun to supply the social and security services of local government. Doomsayers point to this development as a harbinger of failure, but it mirrors a highly characteristic pattern of political development throughout history. Government is always in the first instance local, and, as happened in feudal times, local governments achieve a high state of political development more quickly than do nation-states. In due course, national governments develop by co-opting (rather than displacing) local polit-

FALEH KHEIBER/REUTERS

Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki

Mr. Loyola is a former consultant for communications and policy planning at the Department of Defense.

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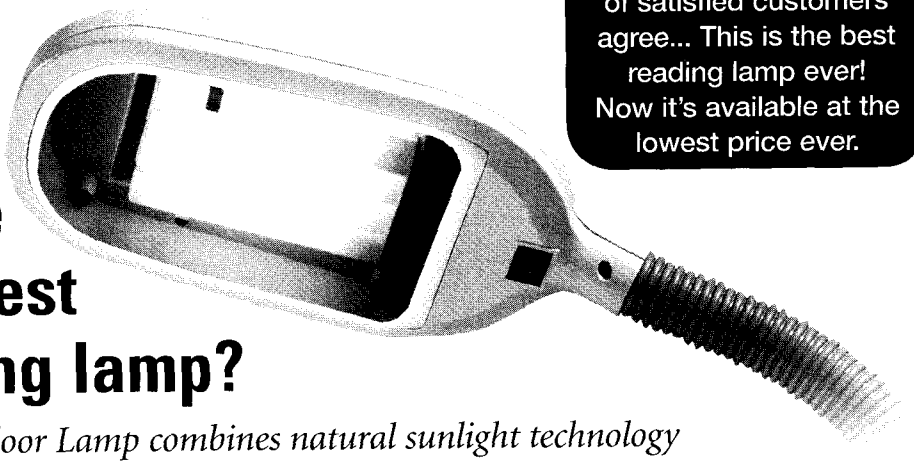

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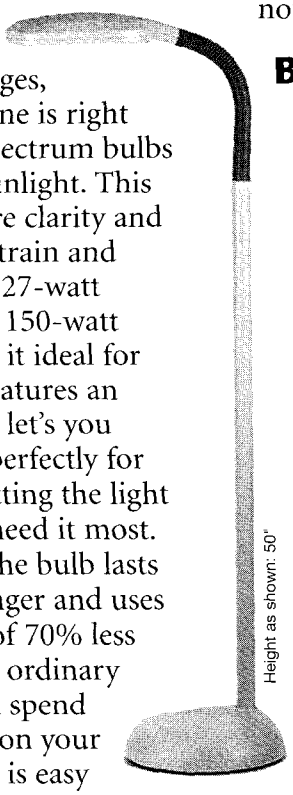

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ical entities. Far from threatening the viability of Iraq's democracy, the Shiite militias may prove to be a key to its success. The first step is to coordinate their governance activities, and, in the political realm, prime minister Nouri al-Maliki is accomplishing precisely that.

Signs of Iran's influence among the Shiite militias are another source of concern, but Iran's freedom of action within Iraqi politics is in fact highly constrained. It cannot play favorites among the factions, because any faction that is seen as particularly close to Iran will quickly be attacked by the others as traitorous. Indeed, many powerful Shiite groups see no contradiction in being both anti-American and anti-Iranian. Iran presents a short-term threat to Iraqi stability, chiefly because of its enmity toward the U.S. But in the long run, Iran's interests in Iraq align with ours, much as in Afghanistan: Democracy is the best way to advance the causes of its fellow Shiites, and stability in Iraq is the best way to protect its own. Even the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, which was created by Iran to replace Saddam's regime with an Islamic republic, is supporting the Maliki government. And Iraq's Shiites are not likely to exchange representative majority rule for arbitrary rule by a group of fundamentalist clerics, especially since Iraq's clerics see their role as more spiritual than political.

It is admittedly difficult to offer a hopeful prognosis in the glare of the awful carnage that has seized Baghdad and other areas of the country. But what is happening now may well be the worst that can happen. Those who fear a collapse of the state ignore the fact that none of Iraq's major armed groups is fighting the government. Moves toward independence by Iraq's Kurdish minority are perhaps the most worrisome prospect, but the Kurds have little to gain and much to lose from turning against the government, and 86 percent of those polled in Kurdish areas believe that the government will improve the situation in Iraq. Finally, those who fear that Iraq may break apart along the Sunni–Shiite divide, recalling the war in India following its independence, ignore the bonds of tribe, language, and nationality that tie Iraq's Arabs to each other.

As for the fascist model, whereby a dictatorship is established at the ballot box, there simply is no organization that commands national support broad enough for a full political takeover. The Shiites are in the majority, but they are divided, their militias are small, and their interests in the long run are virtually identical to those of the existing central government. This explains recent polls suggesting that most Shiites trust both the Iraqi security forces *and* their own militias to protect them.

In essence, what we have in Iraq now is a localized version of the Algerian civil war of the 1990s. That civil war touched every part of the country and continued for years without ever threatening the collapse of the government. The insurgents never had a formally unified leadership, or even much of a political program beyond their main grievance (the government's canceling of a 1992 election in which Islamists were expected to fare well). The insurgency eventually petered out, a victim of its own pointlessness.

By contrast, the anti-government insurgency in Iraq is almost entirely based in the Sunni minority and remains localized to the Sunni provinces and Baghdad. The Sunni insurgents' failure to achieve national scope (more than half of all attacks against security forces and civilians still happen in Baghdad and Anbar Province alone) is indeed amazing, considering their evident resources and how long they have been at it. Confined to a minority, and bereft of any political program that anyone can understand, the insurgency is destined to remain local. The civil strife currently sweeping Iraq—and especially its capital—is exacting a terrible human toll. But Iraqis will eventually tire of the violence, as the Algerians did, for the simple reason that violence for the sake of violence cannot indefinitely sustain popular support.

As the months pass, the struggle for Iraqi democracy is rapidly becoming Iraq's fight. Nearly all military operations in Iraq today are either joint or Iraqi-led. Coalition casualties have evened out, while those of the Iraqi security forces have increased dramatically. These are grim but telling statistics. Iraq's government of national unity is not out of danger yet. But given its broad representation of Iraq's communities—and the absence of any real competition—it is getting harder to see how it can fail. And victory by default is victory all the same. **NR**

■ AT WAR II

All About 'Fascism'

The word of the day

JONAH GOLDBERG

In early August, President Bush said that we are at war with "Islamic fascists." This brought predictable harrumphs and guffaws from various American quarters and shouts of outrage from the Middle East. Seemingly in response, Bush quickly played down the narrow fascist angle, arguing that jihadis aren't fascists so much as co-marchers in the same parade of horribles. "They are successors to fascists, to Nazis, to Communists, and other totalitarians of the 20th century," he told an American Legion audience. Around the same time, Donald Rumsfeld warned that we face "the rising threat of a new type of fascism." He went on to suggest that those who fail to acknowledge this threat are akin to those who sought to appease Hitler. In response to all this, the talk shows went batty, the White House unleashed a phalanx of spinners to defend its argumentum ad Hitlerum, the Left erupted in a tizzy of tut-tutting, and just about everyone jumped into a big argument about what fascism was, is, and should be.

You might be thinking: Boy, this sounds like a good time for someone to write a book about fascism. And if you're not, my publisher is. Two years overdue, I'm at work on just such a book. One reason it's taken so long is that I've tried to make sense of the academic literature. Fascism scholarship is a strange land, and being a stranger in it reveals all sorts of unexpected things.

For example, you might have noticed that, amid all the Sturm und Drang over Bush's comments, very few people offered simple definitions of what fascism is. And those who did offer what appeared to be technical definitions almost never referred to a source. There's a simple explanation for this: Everyone thinks he

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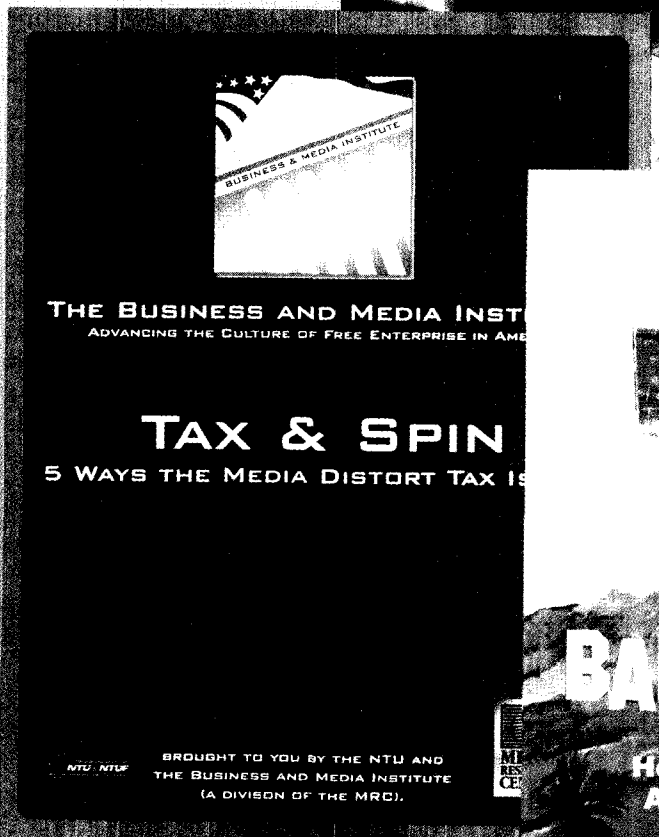
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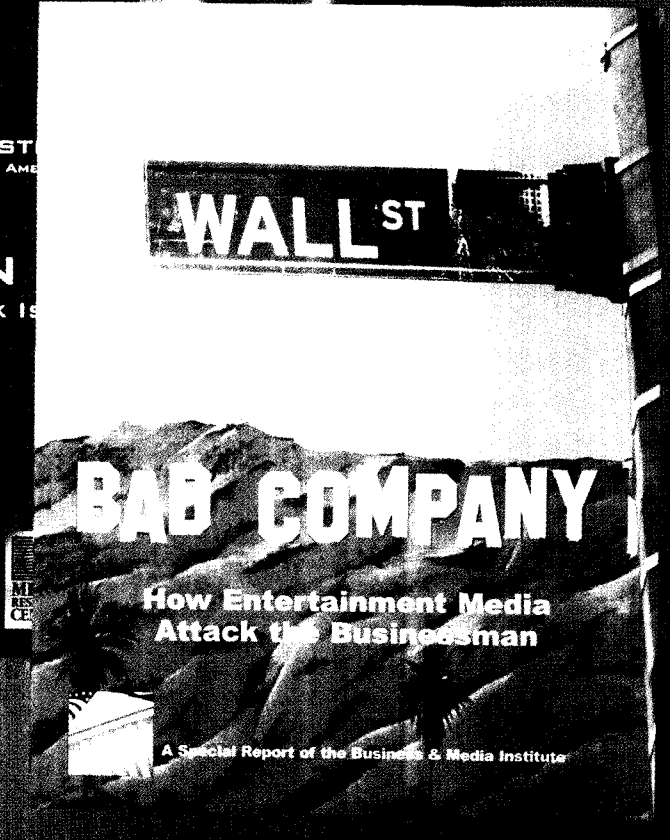

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knows what fascism is, except for the people who study it.

Indeed, this has become something of an inside joke in the academic literature. "Such is the welter of divergent opinion surrounding the nature of the term," writes Roger Griffin in his introduction to *The Nature of Fascism*, "that it is almost *de rigueur* to open contributions to the debate on fascism with some such observation." One of the main reasons the scholarly compass hasn't been fixed is that the magnetic pull of Marxism distorted its reading for so many years. Marxist theory—which operated as a secular gospel for an army of intellectuals—predicted that the capitalist ruling classes would mount a "last gasp" attack on the progressive historical juggernaut of Communism. When fascism popped up, some Communists said, in effect, "Aha! Marx's prophecy has been fulfilled!" Others recognized that fascism and, even more acutely, National Socialism were dangerous competitors to Bolshevism. National Socialism, which allowed Germans (or Romanians, Frenchmen, etc.) to be both nationalistic chauvinists *and* socialists, was very appealing to people who liked left-wing economics but rejected an "international" socialism run out of the Kremlin.

As a result, Stalin ordered every loyal party member and organ to paint fascism as a right-wing phenomenon and ban the word "socialist" from any discussion of avowedly socialist fascist groups. Indeed, for a brief time Stalin's doctrine of "social fascism" held that any ideology or movement that was not loyal to Moscow was fascist. The rationale was that if you weren't helping the One True Faith, you were helping the capitalists. FDR, John Dewey, W. E. B. Du Bois, the American Federation of Labor, the Socialist Party of America and its president Norman Thomas—all were "social fascists," according to the Communist Party of the United States of America.

Particularly since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Marxist notion of fascism as a capitalistic tool of the ruling classes has fallen into disrepute among scholars—though it continues to thrive in the more moonbatty domains of the Internet. But the Left has never abandoned the conviction that it has an exclusive right to the word "fascist," and it's never stopped using the word promiscuously to describe anything it dislikes. That's because the Left is convinced—and has convinced many others, including its liberal allies—that it is the sole possessor and judge of political virtue. Hence, the farther you get from the Left, the closer you get to being a fascist. Orwell spotted this trend early, writing in his 1946 essay "Politics and the English Language" that "fascism" had come to mean nothing more than "something not desirable."

And what could be more undesirable than conservatives? In the 1950s, a whole pseudoscience developed around works like Theodor Adorno's *Authoritarian Personality*, holding that, for example, opposition to the welfare state was prima facie evidence of bigoted and fascist tendencies. And this was intellectually rigorous compared with what followed. New York congressman Charlie Rangel compared the Contract with America to Nazism, with the Nazis coming out favorably: "Hitler wasn't even talking about doing these things." That statement at least had the benefit of being technically true: Hitler wasn't talking about tax cuts and entitlement reform, because Hitler was a socialist. A better example of liberal legerdemain with the meaning of "fascism" is Bill Clinton's declaration in 2000 that the Texas GOP platform "was so bad that you could get rid of every fascist tract in your library if you just had a copy."

Things aren't much better in the popular culture, where "fascism" has long meant little more than "bullying" and "unnice"—from the "soup Nazi" in *Seinfeld* (ah yes, Communists would never bully anyone waiting in a soup line) to films like *Bull Durham*, in which Kevin Costner instructs a baseball-pitching Tim Robbins: "Don't try to strike everybody out. Strikeouts are boring and besides that, they're fascist. Throw some ground balls. They're more democratic."

This is not a propitious climate for a serious conversation about fascism. Many War on Terror hawks welcomed President Bush's "Islamic fascists" comments because they have been using the term "Islamofascism" for years. But it's doubtful Bush's definition of fascism is much more sophisticated than "'fascism' equals 'bad,'" let alone in sync with those who want to take the fight to Riyadh. Moreover, if what some call "jihadism" is a

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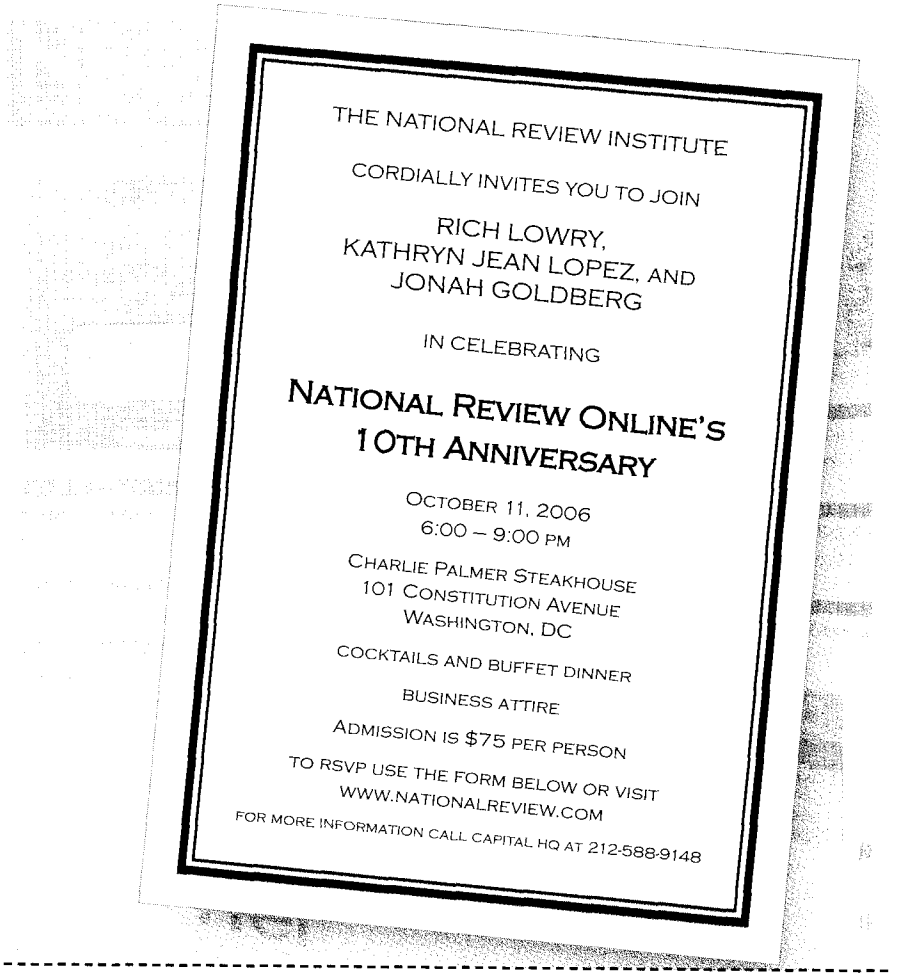
form of fascism, then it cannot be the ideology of terrorists alone. It must also be the ideology of those who sympathize with and defend terrorists. Not every Italian Fascist was a member of Mussolini's "action squads," and not every Nazi was a Brown Shirt. One could similarly argue that Bush and Rumsfeld are appeasing Islamofascism by maintaining alliances with Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and other countries that export, support, or harbor Islamofascist terrorists. This is not to say that such ugly deal-making isn't a justifiable tool in the war—we sided with Stalin to defeat Hitler after all. But it does dull and smudge the bright moral lines this White House is trying to paint.

On the other hand, it's difficult to take seriously liberals like Paul Krugman—who saw nothing wrong with comparing the backlash against the Dixie Chicks to the rise of Nazism—or the countless jabberers who have over the years denounced William F. Buckley Jr., Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan, et al. as fascists. One gets the sense that today's liberals—beyond their phobia of offending the coalition of the oppressed (in this case, the Muslims of CAIR)—are reluctant to let Bush use "Islamic fascism" because they don't want to give up their monopoly on the F-word.

I think Islamism *is* a form of fascism, though Michael Ledeen is probably right that its closest Western analogue is to be found in the little-discussed clerical fascisms of Eastern Europe, particularly the Romanian Legion of the Archangel Michael. This was, in the words of Stanley Payne, "the most anomalous of fascist movements" because it maintained a Christian character even as it went in for the more typical fascist mysticism (to become a member of a cell or "nest," you were expected to suck the blood from fellow members' arms and perform other macabre acts). Perhaps its Christian flavor came from the fact that the region had often been the frontline in Europe's historical clash with Islam.

Regardless, the writings of Sayyid Qutb, the founding ideologue of what could be called "bin Ladenism," are rife with fascist sentiment. Wahhabism—a statist ideology—was itself born during the fascist period of the 1920s and 1930s. Its obsession with social cleanliness and purity, its us-versus-them conception of community, its territorial and ideological expansionism, its radical anti-Semitism (which, to be precise, is not central to fascism as it was to Nazism), its utopian desire to restore the caliphate, its hatred of corrupt democracy with its modernity and bourgeois values: All of these fit the numerous checklists scholars have come up with in lieu of workable definitions of "fascism."

And these checklists exist for a reason. Fascism is not an intellectual disease, some contagion that escaped a German lab and poisoned humanity. A person not inclined to be a Nazi probably won't become one by reading *Mein Kampf*. Fascism was, rather, a real and coherent ideology. But we rarely use it in that sense. For most of us it is instead a word to describe a bundle of human desires and passions that, for historically contingent reasons, have a tendency to run amok. Yes, ideas have consequences. But receptivity to them has consequences as well. The enemy we face is evil and a serious threat to our way of life, no matter what name we give it. If calling it fascist helps Americans recognize this fact, by all means let's call it fascist. But the sad truth is that if more Americans understood the nature of our enemy, we wouldn't need to argue about it. **NR**



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■ CONSERVATISM

The Non-Nobelist

But Gordon Tullock, maverick economist, deserves one

JOHN J. MILLER

SHORTLY after George Mason University opened its new law-school building a few years ago, then-governor of Virginia Jim Gilmore toured it. He asked to meet Gordon Tullock, a renowned economist on the faculty. Off a curving fourth-floor hallway, in Tullock's freshly furnished office, the two men shook hands. "You're the governor?" asked Tullock. "Good. Then maybe you can fix the leak in my ceiling."

And that, in a nutshell, may explain why Tullock has failed to win a Nobel Prize in economics—an award he richly deserves, but one that has eluded him for decades. He is famously impolitic, and has developed a knack for provocation—a skill that can be either irritating or endearing. Whatever its effect, however, Tullock's fondness for controversy is backed up by a daring intellect that cuts across disciplines and has shaped free-market thinking for more than a generation. "Gordon is one of the most original-minded persons in the world," says Milton Friedman, who took home the Nobel in 1976. "I always thought it was a mistake not to let him have a prize."

As the Nobel Foundation prepares to name this year's recipient in October, it would do well to reconsider the case for Tullock. He has led an important and influential life, despite being constantly overlooked.

Tullock, now 84, was born and raised in Rockford, Ill. Although he attended the University of Chicago, he never formally received his bachelor's degree because he objected to paying a $5 fee. "It doesn't sound like a lot of money now, but it was to me back then," he explains. This refusal didn't stop him from entering Chicago's law school, where he took his first and only course in economics. His teacher for that class was Henry B. Simons, a fierce critic of the New Deal and a founder of the fabled Chicago School—a group of professors and students, including Friedman, who would go on to win a dozen Nobels.

Tullock eventually earned his law degree and went into private practice. This lasted four months. "I participated in two minor court cases—I won one that I should have lost, and I lost one that I should have won," he says. He then entered the Foreign Service and spent several years in China, Hong Kong, and Korea, sparking a lifelong fascination with international relations. He's currently writing a book on the history of U.S. foreign affairs. "Since about 1890, our policies almost always have been wrong," he says with a smirk—as usual, he's seeking a reaction. He describes why it was a mistake to have intervened in the First World War and how Pearl Harbor might have been avoided. Then he suggests that it might be worthwhile, right now, for the U.S. to invade Brazil: "We could move into the jungle and develop it." A couple of years ago, in fact, he drafted a paper urging this course of action. "I had the good sense not to give it wide circulation." If nothing else, Tullock loves to start an argument—even one that guarantees he won't ever win the Nobel Peace Prize.

Gordon Tullock

DARREN GYGI

Working for the State Department allowed Tullock to observe the operations of government up close. He was not enamored with what he saw, but the experience did give an idea for a book. He quit the diplomatic corps to write *The Politics of Bureaucracy*. As Tullock searched for a publisher, his photocopied manuscript found its way into the hands of Prof. James M. Buchanan, who was then teaching at the University of Virginia.

This was the start of a remarkably productive association. Buchanan invited Tullock to Charlottesville for a year-long fellowship. By the time it was over, in 1959, the two had agreed to collaborate on a book about the economics of constitutions and democracies. Curiously, Tullock doesn't vote: "Anthony Downs [an economist] convinced me long ago that I stand a greater chance of being killed in a car accident on the way to the polls than I do of making a difference with my vote," he says. "So why bother?" Tullock takes great pleasure in announcing this view—and on Election Day, friends enjoy attaching their "I Voted" stickers to his office door.

In 1962, Buchanan and Tullock released *The Calculus of Consent*, which explained how economic rules affect political decisions. The book is a founding text of public-choice theory, a powerful intellectual movement that analyzes why governments so often fail to achieve their goals. "It's a classic," says William A. Niskanen, chairman of the Cato Institute. Public-choice theorists view lawmakers and bureaucrats through the lens of classical economics: as rational deliberators acting on the basis of their own interests. By eschewing the naïve view of public officials as selfless benefactors of the public good, this approach has blazed new trails in explaining government dysfunctionality. Buchanan and Tullock shared a byline and described their partnership in a preface to *Consent*: "In the most fundamental sense, the whole book is a genuinely joint product."

Yet in 1986, when the Nobel people decided that public-choice theory had matured to the point of deserving the prize, they gave it to Buchanan alone. He had certainly earned it, and his distinguished career included many books and papers that he had written by himself. At the center of his achievement, however, lay his work with Tullock. When *National*

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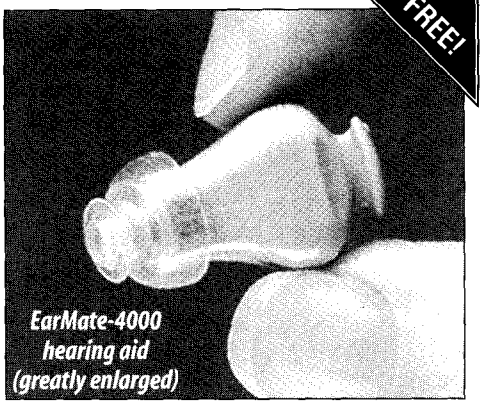

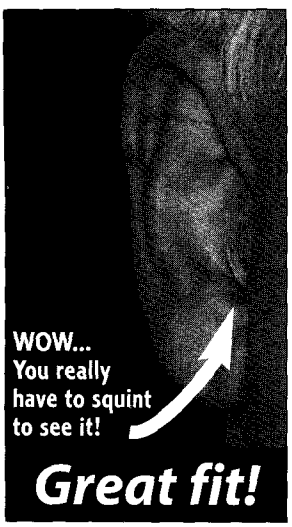

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Journal asked Buchanan's co-author about being skipped over, Tullock shot back: "I'm mad about it, to put it bluntly."

The slight was both obvious and gratuitous: In the 36 years since the economics prize was first awarded in 1969, it has been shared 16 times. Some thought that Tullock was a victim of his background. Lacking any formal training in economics beyond that single law-school class, he was possibly seen as an interloper who didn't truly qualify. Moreover, Tullock has been called a "natural economist," meaning that he did not have to sit through hours of lectures to understand his discipline. Nor did he have to write a thick dissertation. His contributions to economics have come in the form of big ideas and deep insights, rather than the technical genius and mathematical rigor that increasingly dominate the field. Tullock himself thinks something else may have played a role: "I have no doubt that I was making a lot of nasty cracks about Sweden and its socialist economy in those days." The Nobel Foundation, of course, is based in Stockholm.

Tullock's contributions to economics have come in the form of big ideas and deep insights.

By the time he had missed out on the big prize, Tullock was used to snubs. As a professor at the University of Virginia in the 1960s, he was turned down for promotion three times, prompting him to leave. "I could see they didn't want me around," he says. There's a nomadic quality to his life, with its spells at the University of South Carolina, Rice, Virginia Tech, and the University of Arizona. His current appointment, at George Mason, is actually his second stop at the school.

Even if Sweden's prize-pickers were to shed their presumed biases, it's unlikely that they'd circle back to Tullock. They've already given an award for the ideas contained in *The Calculus of Consent*. But the case for Tullock doesn't need to rest on this book alone, as his greatest contribution to economics may lie somewhere else entirely.

Tullock is the author of one of the most groundbreaking economics papers ever published: "The Welfare Costs of Tariffs, Monopolies, and Theft." It explained that when individuals or groups try to gain economic advantages through the manipulation of government policy—lobbying to build trade barriers or legal monopolies, for instance—the costs of their activities are both high and hidden. They not only discourage competition, but also drive talented people into non-productive activities, as skilled managers devote themselves to winning new favors from government or defending the ones they already have. Today, this behavior is called "rent-seeking," and it is of course deeply embedded in Washington's political culture of earmarks and subsidies. In his paper, Tullock mischievously likened the whole enterprise to theft. "I try to raise eyebrows in everything I write," he says.

Top journals refused to publish the paper. "It does not appear significant (as a theoretical contribution)," wrote the editor of *The American Economic Review* in a rejection letter. The *Journal of Political Economy* and The *Southern Economic Journal* turned him down as well. A less prestigious outlet, The *Western Economic Journal*, finally published it in 1967. Yet almost nobody noticed. "It went down the memory hole," says Tullock. Then, seven years later, *The American Economic Review* printed an article by Anne Krueger on rent-seeking—she actually invented the term, and arrived at the concept with no knowledge of Tullock's prior scholarship. All of a sudden, Tullock's pioneering work began to receive attention. Rescued from obscurity, it has since been credited with helping overturn the once-consensus view that the social costs of government regulations are minimal.

Tullock never married and he has no kids, so what he will leave behind is his work. There's an awful lot of it, and it covers a vast range of subjects: income redistribution, political revolutions, and even biology (he once wrote a paper on a bird called the coal tit). The Liberty Fund recently put out *The Selected Works of Gordon Tullock*, a ten-volume set that spans more than 4,000 pages. "I can't complain about my career being blighted," he says. "I've done very well." He's also done a great deal of good, for which the world should be grateful, regardless of what they say in Stockholm. **NR**

■ TERRORISM II

A Peek at Manpo

In which our correspondent almost visits North Korea

ROB LONG

MAKE a note of this: If someone serves you a bowl of deep-fried sparrows, the best thing to do is pick one up quickly and eat it head first. There are two reasons for this: One, the head is the most psychologically squirrelly part of any animal, so it's best to get that part into your mouth as fast as possible; and two, it's also the crunchiest part of the sparrow, and, as everybody knows, if something is deep fried and crunchy, how bad could it be?

Not bad, really. Especially with a dipping sauce.

I tucked into a bowl of fried sparrows a few weeks ago, in the small river town of Ji'an, in the northern part of China. Ji'an is a border town, and the river that flows through it, the Yalu, has bustling, cheerful China on one side and creepy, silent North Korea on the other. I had come to Ji'an on the unlikely chance that I could get into North Korea by walking across the railroad bridge from Ji'an to Manpo—there's no other way across the river, though it's only 25 or 30 meters wide—and presenting myself and my cash and my disarming smile to the emaciated character who (I imagined) was guarding the border and who would (I imagined) let me stroll the streets of Manpo for the price of a jumbo Kit Kat bar. I'll cut to the chase: It didn't happen.

I had planned a more elaborate visit, of course. I joined a group a few months ago that was going to Pyongyang and a few other parts of North Korea. The North Koreans, apparently, are willing to accept small groups of escorted tourists, which is a lucky coincidence, because small groups of tourists are pretty much

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all they can hope for, especially in August, when Pyongyang has to compete with Edgartown and Castine for the summer tourist dollar. We were prepared for the propaganda and the ceaseless surveillance, told we would eat "but not well," and in general braced to be barraged by the kind of nonsense that used to irritate travelers to the old Soviet Union—trips to cement factories and spotless hospitals and cheerfully robotic elementary-school classrooms.

Personally, I love that stuff. I have a collection of Chinese propaganda posters from the Cultural Revolution, and I've collected some of the writings of the fiendishly nuts leader of Turkmenistan, who upon taking power after the collapse of the Soviet Union changed his name to Turkmenbashi ("The Leader of All Turkmen") and named a month after his mother. But North Korea eluded and tantalized. I have a wonderful propaganda poster of recent vintage that came to me, via a few handoffs and back-channels, directly from Pyongyang. On the right side, shouting, defiant faces of women of all races and creeds—North Korean, African, vaguely Third Worldly looking headbands, that sort of thing. And on the left, crouching in the lower corner, the mousy, terrified figures of a U.S. and a Japanese soldier. And across the center, the word "No!" in giant English letters, and in forceful Korean script: "21st Century Without Sexual Harassment!" How perfect is that?

But the North Koreans, apparently, don't much care if my jones for totalitarian tourism is satisfied. Word came before I left for Beijing that the flight to Pyongyang had been canceled, and our visit was officially off. There was trouble, we were told, with the recent rains. Flooding, water damage, homelessness—the kinds of things it's hard to explain away.

But I flew to Beijing anyway, and headed north. You know, just in case.

In Ji'an, I walked across the railroad bridge until I came to a painted white line on the tracks: the official border between roaring China and its decrepit neighbor. A smiling, barely teenaged Chinese guard slouched against the rail, using a bright pink "China Mobile" umbrella to shield away the sun. He laughed as I crouched low to take a dramatic picture of the white line, the railroad tracks, and the grim buildings of Manpo beyond. He laughed and pointed to the North Korean side and shrugged.

I took a bunch of pictures of the bridge, and of the North Korean children swimming in the river. Two men appeared on bicycles on the opposite bank as I was snapping photos and waving, and my Chinese guide loudly patted his stomach and suggested we go for lunch.

"So who were those two guys?" I asked, crunching into a sparrow's head.

"Army," my guide said. "They don't like so much photos."

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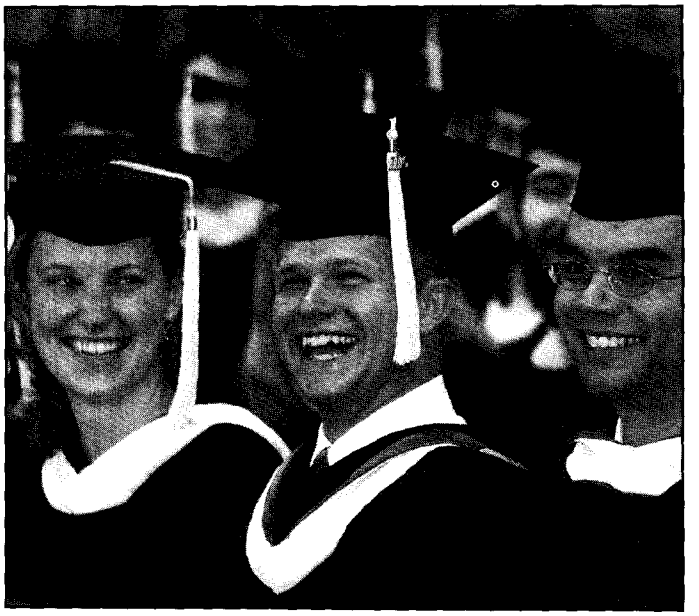

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"But what could they do if they wanted me to stop taking them?" I asked.

"Fire into the air," he said, dipping a sparrow in the sauce.

Makes sense, I thought. That's sort of the North Korean solution to things: fire something into the air—a bullet, a Taepodong missile, whatever's handy.

"And then what?" I asked.

My guide shrugged.

There's a lot of shrugging going on right now, when it comes to North Korea. The Chinese policy is pretty clear: not our problem, and don't make it our problem. They send refugees right back across the river, if they find them (and they almost always do). The South Korean policy is to shrug and change the subject. They know that any change in the status quo—meaning, unification whole or partial—is going to result in a giant, crushingly expensive mess, right in the middle of the most miraculous economic boom imaginable. And the Japanese—arguably the only real target of a North Korean missile launch—are so universally loathed in the region that the most they can do is clear their throats nervously and look to Washington, because, honestly, the Chinese and the South Koreans are just not going to get all that worked up over a threat to Japan. Part of them might even enjoy it.

North Korea is a knot that cannot be untied by diplomacy or force or anything, really, without a lot of chaos and bloodshed and expense.

The North Korean situation—millions of hungry people, living in a paranoid socialist nightmare led by a despotic, rat-in-a-coffee-can leader—has no solution. No good solution, anyway. The trouble is, we Americans are solution oriented. "What's the plan?" we ask ourselves. One of the more bitterly enjoyable tropes of the anti–Iraq War crowd has been their childish—and classically American—insistence that a lack of "planning" contributed to the difficulty of securing a peaceful Iraq, as if "planning" could somehow soothe the toxic brew of Shiite, Sunni, and Kurd. Some things are just disastrous messes, which doesn't mean they're not worth doing.

North Korea is a knot that cannot be untied by diplomacy or force or anything, really, without a lot of chaos and bloodshed and expense. It's anyone's guess how much blood and exactly whose expense, but it's a sad inevitability that before the Hermit Kingdom goes the way of the Soviet Union, or Mao's China, a lot of things are going to get fired into the air. **NR**

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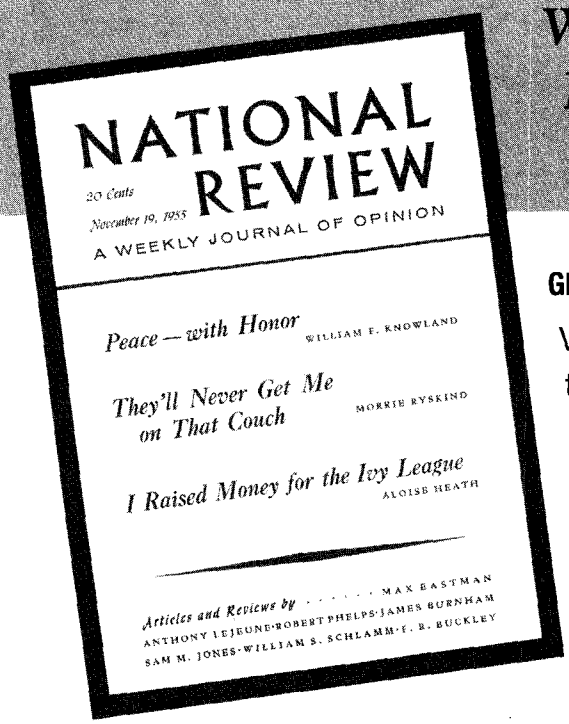
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■ COVER STORY

Preventing Pelosi

Is it possible? Maybe, but things look grim

KATE O'BEIRNE & RAMESH PONNURU

THE question about the November elections isn't whether the Republicans will lose seats, but how many they will lose.

As summer draws to a close, the forecasts are getting bleak. If Republicans lose 15 House seats, they will lose their majority as well. Robert Novak writes that if the election were held now, "the GOP would probably lose 26 seats." Al Hunt chortles: "Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Chairman Charles Rangel and Chairman—again—John Dingell. Those titles will soon sound familiar." Republican Hill staffers are eyeing the exits, looking to get out while the getting's good. They may be too late: K Street lobbying shops are hiring Democrats in anticipation of a shift in power.

Republicans are doing better in the Senate. They are likely to lose seats there, but probably not their majority. Even if Republican incumbents lose in all of the states where they are most at risk—Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Montana, and Missouri—Democrats would still have to pull off an unlikely victory in either Virginia or Tennessee to win the majority. It is at least as likely that Republicans will offset their losses by picking up seats in Maryland or New Jersey.

This happier outlook in the Senate is historically anomalous. The political analyst Jay Cost points out that since the direct election of senators began, the House has never switched hands without the Senate's doing so. This pattern isn't just a statistical fluke: While congressmen can gerrymander their districts to withstand the gales of public opinion, senators can't redraw the borders of their states. (In 2004, 98.8 percent of House members were reelected. Only 10 of the 435 races were won with less than 55 percent of the vote.)

But all such rules of politics are true only till they're not. In 1998, Republicans took comfort in the fact that off-year elections had gone well for the opposition for more than six decades, especially in the sixth year of a presidency. But while the historical observation was accurate, President Clinton's party still won seats from the Republicans. This year, voters could make history again by giving the House to the Democrats while leaving the Senate to the Republicans.

HOSTILE ENVIRONMENTS

House Republicans face a daunting national political environment. The continued fighting in Iraq, along with the absence of a clear path to victory, has demoralized Republicans and angered Democrats. It has soured the public mood even on seemingly unrelated issues. High gas prices have reduced effective take-home pay and added to worries about the solidity of the economic boom.

Some Republicans have drawn hope from the fact that forecasters thought they would lose seats in 2002 and turned out to be wrong. But most of the poll numbers looked worse for Republicans in August 2006 than they did in August 2002. In 2002, 51 percent of Americans thought the country was "on the wrong track" while 43 percent thought we were headed "in the right direction." That eight-point gap has ballooned to 38 points: Now 66 percent of the public thinks we're on the wrong track, compared with 28 percent who think the opposite.

The biggest difference between now and then is that President Bush's numbers have declined. In August 2002, 65 percent of the public approved of his performance. Now he's south of 40 percent. Not even Bush's handling of terrorism wins reliable majority approval anymore. The data on congressional incumbents aren't encouraging either. In 2002, about 60 percent of voters wanted to reelect their congressmen. That has dropped to 51 percent—just barely above the 49 percent that voters registered in 1994, the year they threw out the Democratic majority that had ruled the House for 40 years.

As if this weren't bad enough, many Republicans now have to campaign in difficult local environments as well. Republicans may lose three seats in Ohio alone. Scandal-prone Republican governor Bob Taft has a 17 percent approval rating (which is a good part of why Republicans also look likely to lose the governor's mansion and may lose a Senate seat in Ohio this fall). Three more Republican seats are at risk in Indiana, where Republican governor Mitch Daniels's fights with the legislature have sunk his approval rating to 39 percent. That puts Daniels ahead only of Ohio's Taft, Alaska's Republican governor Frank Murkowski, who just lost his primary for reelection, and Kentucky's Republican governor Ernie Fletcher, who has been indicted. All of these governors have lower approval ratings, by the way, than Louisiana's Democratic governor Kathleen Blanco, who dithered while New Orleans sank.

Other Republican incumbents just have the bad luck of running in blue states in a blue year. Three of the four endangered congressmen in Pennsylvania are running in districts that voted for Al Gore and John Kerry. The three at risk in Connecticut are also running in Kerry country.

And Republicans have fumbled in a few races. The fourth at-risk Pennsylvanian, Don Sherwood, is from a district that Bush comfortably carried. But voters were not pleased when a former mistress alleged that he had abused her. Tom DeLay decided not to run for reelection in his Texas district only after winning the primary.

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Republicans tried to put a substitute candidate on the ballot, but their maneuvers were harebrained—as a result, this majority-Republican district will have no Republican candidate this fall. John Hostettler, in southwestern Indiana, always has unnecessarily tough races, not least because he eschews PAC money and the advice of party professionals. Even in 2004, a good Republican year, he ran ten points behind Bush. Needless to say, this isn't a good year for Republicans.

At the start of the year, Republicans thought they might be able to win a handful of Democratic seats to offset their losses. They thought they might knock off Melissa Bean, who had beaten a long-time Republican incumbent in the northwestern suburbs of Chicago in 2004, largely because of the latter's personal problems. They saw an opportunity, as well, in the southeastern Ohio seat that Democrat Ted Strickland vacated to run for governor. Those hopes have now faded to nearly nothing. Almost every expert's list of competitive races includes only seats currently held by Republicans. The Democrats have a target-rich environment, and the Republicans are playing pure defense.

NOT FAT AND HAPPY

"This is the toughest off-year election for Republicans since 1982," says Rep. Tom Cole, an Oklahoma Republican widely respected by his peers for his political acumen. He thinks they might weather this storm because they know it's brewing. In 1994, none of the forecasters warned the Democrats that their reign might end. It took (too many) months of bad polls to shake today's congressional Republicans out of complacency, but at last they understand their peril. They have started running ads early.

In 1994, as Cole says, many of the Democrats who lost were "fat and happy." Many of the Republicans in tough races this fall—such as Hostettler, Heather Wilson in New Mexico, and Rob Simmons and Chris Shays in Connecticut—have, in contrast, been in tough races before.

It helps that House Republican leaders understand the stakes. In a normal year, they might have let Bob Ney, a congressman caught up in the Jack Abramoff scandal, try his luck in November. That is especially true because Republican majority leader John Boehner, like Ney, is from Ohio, and Ohio Republicans are a clannish bunch. This year, with every precious seat counting toward the majority, Boehner pressured his colleague to step down and let someone else try to salvage the seat. Boehner won his job in early February by defeating Roy Blunt, who kept the position just below Boehner's. Backbiting between the two might have been expected, but the present challenge seems to have put their rivalry in abeyance. Their colleagues give them credit for working closely together.

No such unity exists on the Democratic side. Nancy Pelosi, the House Democratic leader, urged Jack Murtha to challenge Steny Hoyer, the relatively conservative Democrat who ranks just below her. Rahm Emanuel, who runs the House Democrats' campaign committee, has conducted a semi-public feud with party chairman Howard Dean over strategy. (Dean wants to build the party in all 50 states, while Emanuel wants to allocate resources where the immediate opportunities lie.)

This inside-the-Beltway scuffling won't have any direct effect on voters. But it is a sign that Republican politicians have more confidence in each other than Democratic politicians do. "Ken Mehlman at the RNC versus Howard Dean at the DNC is a no-brainer," says Cole. "Who brings more to the battlefield?" Democratic donors appear to share his assessment. The DNC has $11 million in the bank compared with the RNC's $43 million. Emanuel has taken to chastising his party's top donors in the press for not giving more.

Mehlman himself points to a recent special election in San Diego as evidence that the Republicans' sophisticated turnout operation can help them prevail in a difficult environment. The facts were pretty grim. The incumbent Republican, Randy "Duke" Cunningham, had been sent to jail for taking bribes from lobbyists. The party was divided in the primary race to replace him. The winner, Brian Bilbray, got only 15 percent of the primary vote. Worse still, his most recent job had been as a lobbyist. The Democrats spent $2 million running against a Republican "culture of corruption." Bilbray still won.

The race also demonstrates that this year's elections are likely to be won by whichever party gets its core voters to show up, not which one appeals to on-the-fence voters. Turnout in both parties' primaries has generally been low, which suggests that it's the most committed voters who are likely to participate in the fall elections. The Republican base has been unenthusiastic about the party lately, chiefly because of spending and immigration. But as the threat of a Democratic House looms larger, conservative voters may get motivated—more Republicans than Democrats know who Pelosi is.

House Republicans think that immigration works in their favor. They have generally taken the view that the law has to be enforced before anything that smacks of amnesty is considered. They think that is the politically smart position to take—and even some party officials who prefer Bush's "comprehensive" plan agree. It is an issue that might help Republicans win one of their toughest campaigns. Republican Peter Roskam is facing Democrat Tammy Duckworth, a disabled Iraq War veteran, in the race to succeed retiring Republican Henry Hyde in Chicago's western suburbs. Duckworth has endorsed the Senate's immigration plan. "The immigration issue is off the charts, and 'secure the border' works everywhere [as a message]," says a top party strategist.

Iraq's role in the elections is complicated. The public is deeply unhappy about the way the war has been going, and Republicans get the blame. But the public is split on what to do next. There is no majority for withdrawing quickly. Hence Democrats are split, too. Many of them, including their House leadership, have endorsed a timetable for withdrawal, but most of the candidates running in competitive races have not. Thus Dick Morris's recent advice to Republicans—quit talking about Iraq, because the public is not going to be persuaded to support the war—is dead wrong. It is unworkable: Candidates can hardly pretend the war isn't going on. And the public can be persuaded to support Republican positions on the war's future, if not its past.

More to the point, a crucial segment of the public can be reached: the former Iraq War hawks who have become dispirited. Happy talk about the progress of the war will fall on deaf ears. But an acknowledgment of the crisis in Iraq and an emphasis on what would be the disastrous consequences of defeat there may very well strengthen this voting bloc's resolve.

Other War on Terror issues help the Republicans more straightforwardly. Look for Republicans to demand that congressmen go on record on the National Security Agency's wiretaps and the rights of suspected terrorists. If the election is only a referendum on the Republicans, the party will lose big—the public isn't happy, and the

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Jerusalem (II)

Should the U.S. Embassy be moved to the capital of Israel?

In a previous clarifying message we showed that before the Six-Day War in 1967, the claim that Jerusalem was a Moslem/Arab city had seldom been asserted and that such claim had come about only in modern times. The status of Jerusalem continues to be of great importance. The Arabs demand that at least the eastern part of the city should be yielded to them. The Israelis insist that Jerusalem continue as the indivisible capital of their country.

What are the facts?

Jerusalem – reunited and indivisible. Ever since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, all American governments and Congress have confirmed their conviction that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and that, once reunited, it should remain indivisible.

Before the Six-Day War in 1967 the city was divided, the Jordanians having occupied the eastern part. During their 19-year reign, all Jewish residents were driven out and all Jewish places of worship closed or destroyed. The various Christian denominations operated under the strict control of Moslem authorities.

> "The status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state."

All this ended in 1967 with the liberation of all of Jerusalem by the Israel Defense Forces and with the reunification of the city. Access to all holy places became available to all. The many religious bodies in the holy city (and in all of Israel) are able to pursue their activities without any restrictions. Jerusalem is today truly a free and open city. Just as the whole world rejoiced when the ugly wall dividing Berlin was torn down, so do we rejoice that the wall, the barbed wire and the machine gun emplacements dividing the city were finally torn down.

U.S. Embassy not in Israel's capital. While the Palestinians lay claim to the eastern part of Jerusalem and wish it to become the capital of a hoped-for Palestinian state, nobody questions the western part of the city to be Israeli. It is remarkable therefore that, despite this universal recognition, the United States has steadfastly insisted on placing and keeping its embassy in Tel Aviv, the major commercial city, instead of in Jerusalem, Israel's capital and the seat of the Knesset (parliament), the Supreme Court, and of all government offices. It is as if a government accredited to the United States were to insist on keeping its embassy in, say, New York, rather than in Washington D.C.

With the U.S. in the lead, all other countries, with the sole exceptions of Costa Rica and El Salvador, have also located their embassies in Tel Aviv. It is a bizarre situation: All ambassadors and their staffs – including the U.S. ambassador and his staff – must make almost daily trips to Jerusalem, because no government business is conducted in Tel Aviv. The United States maintains diplomatic relations with over 150 countries. In all of them, the U.S. Embassy is located in the nation's designated capital. The only exception is Israel where, so far, our government has insisted on locating its embassy in a city other than the capital.

Congress in favor of moving embassy to Jerusalem. Despite the fact that, prior to their elections, both Presidents Bush and President Clinton assured the public that the U.S. Embassy would be moved to Israel's capital, the Administration has until now blocked all moves in that direction, declaring that it would jeopardize the so-called "final status" talks on Jerusalem.

Leaders of Congress – both Republican and Democratic – have introduced legislation by which the U.S. Embassy would have to be moved to Jerusalem within the next three or four years. And that was about ten years ago. That legislation has been endorsed by 93 senators. The U.S. has a lease on a 10-acre embassy lot in Talpiot, a totally Jewish neighborhood in West Jerusalem. It is to be hoped therefore, that, before too long, reality will prevail and that the U.S. Embassy in Israel will indeed be located in Jerusalem – the capital of one of its closest allies.

The reason given for not moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem is that it might violate "Arab sensitivities." That might indeed be the case. But while there would be some posturing, none of the Arab states could afford to do much else. Egypt would certainly not refuse its yearly multi-billion dollar subsidy from Washington. King Abdullah of Jordan would not jeopardize the political and financial lifeline that the U.S. has extended to him. Saudi Arabia would make some perfunctory noises, but that would be just about all. The status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state. The move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem will signal once and for all that there will be no U.S. or world support for the division of Jerusalem and for the establishment – in any part of it – as the capital of a new Arab state.

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Republicans are in power. But if the election is a choice—Which party has better plans for the challenges facing the country?—then Republicans will do better. Mehlman has been making that argument for months. So far, Republicans have not succeeded in converting the election from a referendum to a choice. Democrats are not going to help them by offering detailed proposals.

TO THE VICTOR GO THE SPOILS

If the Democrats win the House, they will probably have a very slender majority. During the last six terms, Republicans have, on average, had a ten-seat majority. During the previous six terms, Democrats averaged a 44-seat majority. The Democrats might have a single-digit majority next year, which hasn't happened since the middle of World War II.

Even a slender Democratic majority would be able to pass some legislation. This would mostly be legislation that already enjoys majority support in this Republican House, but that House Republican leaders have, through various stratagems, blocked. The minimum wage would be increased. The re-importation of drugs at discounted prices would be allowed. The government would probably use its purchasing power to impose de facto price controls on the drug industry. Congress might enact some restrictions on wiretapping in the pursuit of terrorists. A Republican Senate would be unlikely to defeat these initiatives, especially since the Republican margin there will probably be small.

There would, however, be no grand legislative agenda. If they had a large enough margin, House Democrats might be able to pass popular legislation and dare Republican senators, or President Bush, to stop them. But they probably wouldn't have the votes even to score such political points.

What they would have the power to do is to issue subpoenas. A Democratic House would launch investigation after investigation. The Bush administration's conduct during Hurricane Katrina; every conceivable aspect of the Iraq War; the putatively nefarious conduct of the oil and gas industries: All would be fair game. Democrats could overreach with these investigations, as congressional Republicans sometimes did in their investigations of the Clinton administration in the 1990s. But such Democrats as John Dingell and Henry Waxman are better at running investigations than the Republicans are, and would find it easier to use the media in the course of them.

A Democratic House would make it deeply unpleasant—and expensive—to work for the Bush administration. "If you think that leaks have hurt [the Bush administration] over the last five years, just wait until people are testifying under oath," warns Marshall Wittmann, who served in the first President Bush's administration when Democrats ran Congress, and who has subsequently joined the Democratic Leadership Council.

A small-margin Democratic Congress would feature more investigations than legislation. The other likely outcome of the election, a small-margin Republican Congress, would probably not feature much of either: It would lack the power to legislate and the motive to investigate.

Americans are mad at Washington in part because its denizens do more bickering than problem-solving. Unless the political climate changes dramatically between Labor Day and Election Day, they're going to have more to be mad about over the next two years. **NR**

■ **CULTURE WATCH**

Polygamy Ascendant?

Rumbles in our marriage debate

ANTHONY DANIELS

THE dissolution of behavioral boundaries with the consequent extension of individual choice has long seemed to many intellectuals to be the most urgent or important task confronting them. Since few social boundaries can be defended with entire philosophical consistency, a world without any such boundaries has seemed to those intellectuals to be not only intellectually honest but also desirable: for only then will man's natural goodness be able to emerge from the dross of the past, with all its inherited petty prejudices, compromises, and hypocrisies.

It is hardly surprising in the circumstances that supporters of polygamy should now come forward to claim their "rights," their place in the sun of non-discrimination. Those harmless folk the necrophiliacs will probably be next. After all, the object of their affections cannot complain or have its interests damaged, for by definition it can have no feelings or interests; and as John Stuart Mill so powerfully argued, the mere disgust of the majority, be it ever so large, is not a good enough reason to prohibit a practice. If someone wished, say, to eat live earthworms in public, assuming that such creatures are not sufficiently conscious to experience suffering, and eating them does not endanger the public health, on what consistent grounds could we stop him?

The arrest on August 28 of Warren Jeffs, the polygamous leader of a religious faction over which he appears to have exercised a droit du seigneur that makes the feudal conduct of old French aristocrats seem positively self-denying, will not much harm the polygamist cause. His habit of conferring underage girls on members of his sect will no doubt rouse the public against him, especially as that public has not been entirely rock-solid in its protection of children from premature sexualization, and therefore may well have a guilty conscience, but his harem-scale polygamy will upset no one very deeply.

A week or so before his arrest, in fact, some teenagers in Utah staged a demonstration in favor of polygamy. They were themselves the children of polygamous unions, and had not been abused or otherwise maltreated; they were properly educated, lacked for nothing, and were altogether normal, healthy, and happy. Apparently they loved all their mothers: That is to say, each of them loved all the women to whom his father was "married." They were angry at the state, not their parents. As one of them said, "Because of our beliefs, many of our people have been incarcer-

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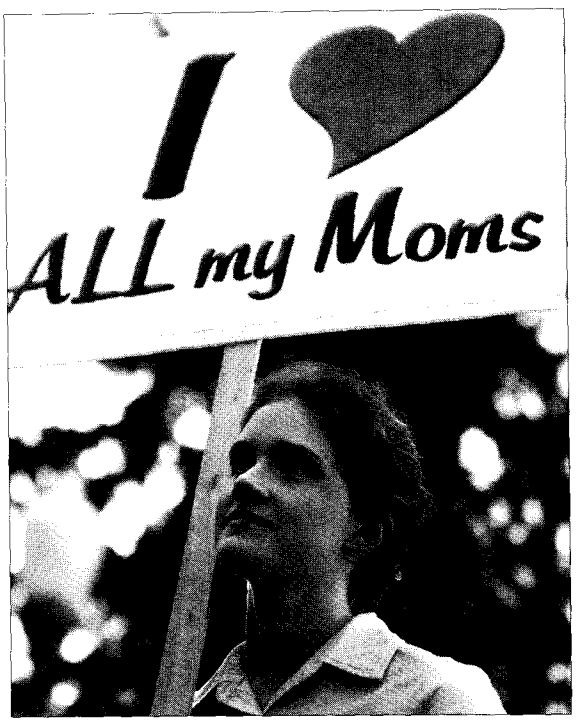
ated and had their basic human rights stripped of them, namely liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I didn't come today to ask for your permission to live my beliefs. I shouldn't have to."

AN INTRICATE CASE

When a belief in the concept of homosexual marriage has gone within a few short years from being an object of ridicule and satire to being a touchstone of a person's political and moral rectitude, the young man's argument is bound to be received sympathetically in some quarters. Indeed, if the chief justice of Utah, Christine Durham, does not exactly agree with it, she appears to sympathize with it. She dissented from the judgment of her fellow justices when a man called Rodney Holm appealed his conviction in Utah on a charge of polygamy.

Holm was married legally in 1986 to a woman called Suzie Stubbs. He then took unto him Wendy Holm, marrying her in a religious ceremony according to the rites of his church. Finally, he took Suzie Stubbs's 16-year-old sister, Ruth, as a wife, marrying her in a ceremony presided over by none other than Warren Jeffs. By the time she was 18, Ruth had given birth to two children by Holm, a fact that proved he was guilty of having had sexual intercourse with her when she was under Utah's legal age of consent. Chief Justice Durham upheld his conviction on this count.



Salt Lake City, August 19

DOUGLAS PIZAC/AP

But she did not think he was guilty of polygamy. The Utah statute says that anyone who "purports to marry" while being legally married to anyone else is guilty of bigamy or polygamy. The question turned on what "purports to marry" actually means. The majority opinion held that, since at the ceremony presided over by Warren Jeffs, marriage was invoked, the wording being not very dissimilar to that used in more orthodox marriage ceremonies, Holm did purport to marry the woman. By contrast, Chief Justice Durham held that, since neither Holm nor either of his two alternate wives, or concubines, ever claimed to be married in the legal sense, and never claimed the legal privileges of man and wife or wives, he had not "purported to marry."

A second question was whether Holm's constitutional right to religious freedom had been violated. The majority of the judges, pointing out that religious freedom does not authorize practices that are otherwise outlawed, such as polygamy, said that it had not; but Chief Justice Durham said that it had. She argued that since he had not committed the crime of polygamy in the first place, his conviction for having lived with two women besides his wife amounted to an assault on his right to freedom of religious belief, and to act upon his belief insofar as it did not contradict any law. In her view, besides, the law had no business to tell consenting adults how to organize their domestic arrangements; this was the slippery slope to tyranny.

In the opinion of the majority of judges, who upheld Holm's guilt, the term "marriage" included de facto liaisons, while in Chief Justice Durham's view, "marriage" meant a formal, legal arrangement, recognized by the state in a way in which no other form of liaison between man and woman was recognized. Thus, bigamy or polygamy could take place only where the husband claimed dishonestly to be marrying according to law, in the knowledge that he was entitled to do no such thing.

If the majority of the justices were right, then any man who, though married, kept a mistress, and supported her as he would have done if he were married to her, was a bigamist. The justices might say in retort that if such a mistress did not actually live in the same house as the wife, the man was not a bigamist; but this would make the domicile of the mistress, not the man's conduct towards her, the test of the legality of the relationship (such a test does in fact exist in Utah). The legality of concubinage would then depend upon where the concubine lived, a moral principle whose validity is at the least dubious.

If, on the other hand, the chief justice was right, the tendency in many jurisdictions increasingly to recognize the rights of participants in de facto relationships, and to reduce the difference between these rights and those of married couples, must be wrong. It has long been the case in Britain, for example, that a kept woman has a claim on a man's estate that is superior to that of his legitimate children. In many places, where the difference between a de facto liaison and a marriage has been drastically reduced, and divorce made irresistibly easy, the act of marriage is almost purely symbolic.

Of course, symbols can be powerful, and even retain their power, at least for a time, when they are without much legal force. Years ago, in my medical practice, I had a patient who tried to commit suicide, and nearly succeeded. Her lover of many years refused to marry her and her mother said that she ought to leave him unless he did. I asked her lover why he refused marriage, to which he replied that it meant nothing, it was only a piece of paper. I then asked him why, if it was only a piece of paper, he refused to sign it. He could not answer, but he did not change his mind. A residual symbolic meaning had triumphed over a real one. But the fact remains that legislators and judges have increasingly emptied the institution of marriage of real content.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

If the tendency to recognize the rights of participants in de facto relationships were to prevail, certain consequences might soon follow. If, after the death of a man such as Mr. Holm, one of his religiously sanctioned concubines went to law to claim a right to part of his estate, having lived with him for many years and borne him several children, she might very well win her case in the name of compassion. The same might happen if a religiously sanctioned

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concubine left such a one as Mr. Holm on account of his cruel or unreasonable conduct. After all, it would be hard upon her and her children to be without any means of support, if either he or his estate were able to provide it. But a legal recognition of the rights of a polygamous de facto wife would, in effect, confer considerable status upon the kind of relationship in which she had been involved; and those who do not agree with Emerson that consistency is the hobgoblin of foolish minds would then start to press for a law to overcome what would be seen as an anomaly. After all, the fact that many homosexuals lived together as if married led in the end to a demand for the certificate of marriage itself. The only way to remove the anomaly of the disadvantageous legal position of de facto polygamous wives would be to make honest women of them: But if three wives were permitted, why not four, or 400? And why not polyandry?

Then, of course, the Muslims would demand the same rights as the fundamentalist Mormons. On what grounds could they be denied? And if they were able to demonstrate, as probably many of them soon would, that they had three wives "back home" waiting to join them, would it not be discriminatory to refuse those wives permission to do so?

Even Holm's conviction for sexual crime is open to moral, if not legal, criticism. The age of consent to sexual relations in Utah is different from that in other states, and therefore is arbitrary (just like every other jurisdiction's). Every man must surely oppose laws that are not only arbitrary in themselves but arbitrarily enforced, as the law against underage sexual relations undoubtedly is. Besides, for Holm to have been guilty of the sexual crime of which he was accused, he had to be ten years older than the girl with whom he had sexual relations. Where is the natural justice in that? Why ten years and not nine or eight, or 29 or 28? Why is a man of 26 who has sex with a girl aged 17 not guilty of a crime, while a man aged 27 who has sex with her is?

It is clear that our society has difficulty in holding the line about any moral matter because it increasingly examines every question from abstract principles, most of which are themselves matters of dispute. And since the world is full of gradations, any dividing line between the permissible and the impermissible is bound to be arbitrary and therefore open to criticism, and each advance in permissiveness is used as a justification for the next. Why should the age of consent be 18 or 17 or 16, or any particular age? Every dividing line will be unjust to someone, indeed to many.

It wouldn't be difficult to construct a justification for polygamy. It is not enough for those who wish to ban it to show that it has bad consequences: It must have worse consequences than any legally permitted alternative arrangement between the sexes, failing which prohibition is mere prejudice and discrimination smuggled in as benevolence. In fact, it is unlikely that the polygamy of fundamentalist Mormons has worse consequences than, for example, the perfectly legal sexual disarray of the ghetto. And in a world whose sole binding principle is John Stuart Mill's argument that the only justification for prohibiting an act is that it harms others, who can object to a relationship entered into freely by consenting adults, such as polygamous marriage?

These days, our society cannot just say no to almost anything short of robbery and murder. That is why, from the outside, it appears so deeply decadent. Its strength, however, derives from the same ultimate source, namely free enquiry. **NR**

■ **THE MIDDLE EAST**

Arab Scribe

Naguib Mahfouz, a personal appreciation

JAY NORDLINGER

NAGUIB MAHFOUZ, the Egyptian writer who died on August 30, was something rare, more rare than you may suppose: He was a born writer. It's not just that Mahfouz wanted to write, but that he was compelled by nature to. In the 1980s, shortly before he won the Nobel Prize, he told an interviewer, "If the urge to write should ever leave me, I want that day to be my last." I don't know whether the urge left Mahfouz on August 30 (or before), though I doubt it. But he died, aged 94.

In his long, productive decades, he wrote some 35 novels, hundreds of short stories, screenplays, etc. People have compared him to an Englishman, Charles Dickens, and to a couple of Frenchmen: Balzac and Zola. They have also compared him to a trio of Russians: Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Solzhenitsyn. But like all great artists—including the writers mentioned—he was primarily himself.

He pretty much invented the novel in Arabic—that language had always favored poetry—and, in fact, he wrote classical Arabic, a very elegant tongue (according to those who know it). When he gave his Nobel Lecture in 1988, he said that the "real winner" was this language. He also said some other things, about which more in due course.

When the Nobel Committee announced its choice that year, just about none of us had heard of Mahfouz—none of us in the West, that is. But he was a household word in the Arab world, a "conscience," as has often been said, as well as a chronicler. An amusing headline appeared in *al-Ahram*, the Egyptian state newspaper: "Nobel Wins the Naguib Mahfouz Prize." The rest of us soon caught up, and Mahfouz's books made an impact, including on me.

The writer was born in 1911 in Cairo, where he would spend his entire life. As a boy, he loved European detective novels, and he would copy them over, rather as composers used to do. (Mozart, for example, copied earlier masters' scores, in order to learn.) After university, Mahfouz achieved the goal of many young Egyptian men: to land a government job. He worked in a variety of ministries, including Religious Affairs and Culture. He ended up in the State Cinema Organization, where he acted as censor—a remarkable job for a writer and artist. A number of his fellows were resentful. But you might say that someone had to do it.

Mahfouz did his civil-servant work—diligently, by all accounts—mainly in the morning, and scribbled in the afternoon. He did this until 1971, when he reached the government's retirement age of 60. Then he kept writing.

His magnum opus is *The Cairo Trilogy*, published in the mid-

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1950s. This trilogy—one massive book, really—is composed of three novels: *Palace Walk*, *Palace of Desire*, and *Sugar Street*. All three titles, not just the last of them, refer to Cairene streets. And Mahfouz knew those streets with extraordinary intimacy. Do you know that he left Egypt only three times in his life? He was sent on two governmental missions—to Yemen and Yugoslavia—and sought medical treatment in Britain. Mahfouz may not have been a man of the world, but he had no trouble finding the world in Cairo, and was clearly universal.

The *Trilogy* cannot be described in a couple of strokes, but suffice it to say that it is a sweeping, panoramic tale of a family across several generations, and that it stretches from World War I to the Egyptian revolution in 1952. Many critics have said that this is more a story of Egypt than of individual characters. I disagree. It is both, of course—but, for me, the personal transcends the national, historical, and political. Mahfouz is a historically informed novelist, not a literarily gifted historian. And he is at his best when he is being his least didactic.

POLITICS AND PROSE

I read the *Trilogy* in what may be considered peculiar circumstances. In November 2000—after our presidential election—I was scheduled to go to Egypt, for the first time. I wanted to prepare by reading Mahfouz, of whose books I had long been aware. (Well, since 1988, and the Nobel Prize.) And, during those weeks, I was working on the George W. Bush campaign in Austin, Texas. So I would do combat with Al Gore during the day, and return to a hotel room at night to plunge myself into Mahfouz's world.

Here's a confession that I know you'll forgive me for: I had always assumed that Mahfouz was no good, or at least not strikingly good. I assumed that Mahfouz had won the Nobel simply for being an Arab—no Arab had won the prize, and the committee is a firm respecter of affirmative action. Indeed, many thought that, in the Mahfouz year, the prize should go to a woman, and Nadine Gordimer's name was mentioned prominently. (She would be the winner in 1991.)

Whatever the Nobel Committee's motivations, they chose a splendid novelist in Mahfouz, for those books are magical, enthralling, full of tremendous humanity and warmth. (That's a word repeatedly applied to the *Trilogy*: warmth.) I lived and died with those characters night after night, not wanting the *Trilogy* to end. After I did, in fact, finish, I resolved to read all of Mahfouz's oeuvre. I'm afraid I cannot recommend it, given limited time. In the *Trilogy*, Mahfouz seemed to touch a peak (and, in truth, the first of the novels—*Palace Walk*—is superior to the subsequent two).

After the election, I first went to Alexandria, then to Cairo. And there I wanted to walk Mahfouz's streets, just like any other *Trilogy*-besotted tourist. My friends took me to Fishawi's, the fabled café in which the writer had spent many an hour, and also to another establishment: the Naguib Mahfouz Café. Clever, alluring name!

One of the most interesting encounters I had was in Alexandria. This was with a woman who lectured at the university, and she was thoroughly modern (or at least she seemed that way): Westernized, multilingual, widely traveled. I told her of my love for the novels, and she said, "Yes, I often wish I could live in those times." I said, "Sure, sure, I know what you mean—but without the subjugation of women, of course," for they were once not allowed outside, or even to be seen through a window. She answered, "No, even with that. I'm not sure I'd mind at all."

Speaking of windows, I felt that I had been afforded a rare glimpse through one. I think what the lady meant was that she longed for the protection and comfort of hearth and home, as against the hurly-burly of the "liberated" world. I'm not sure.

ANTENNAE AND KNIVES

Politically, Mahfouz was a mixed bag. Edward Said said that he had a "nineteenth-century liberal belief in a decent, humane society" (would that Said himself had had), and that seems plausible. Though a Muslim, Mahfouz married a Christian, and he despised Nasser. He backed Sadat and peace with Israel, which got his books banned in several Arab countries. At least one book was banned in Egypt, too:

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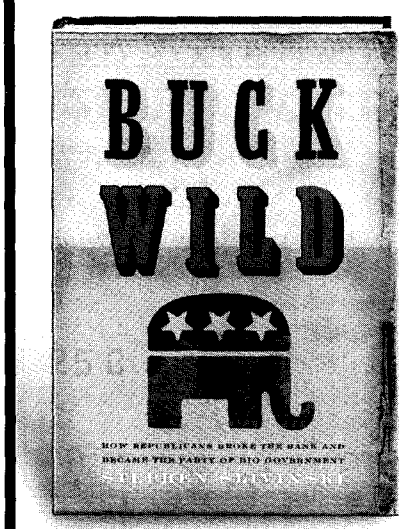
***Buck Wild* does more than reveal what's wrong with the Republicans. It reveals what's wrong with us, the voters who put them in office.**

— P.J. O'ROURKE



If you fell into a coma in November 1994 and woke up yesterday, a lot of things might surprise you. But nothing would baffle you more than what's happened to the Republican Party. Stephen Slivinski can explain. *Buck Wild* tells a painful story, but it's honest and true and well worth reading.

— TUCKER CARLSON

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Children of the Alley, written in 1959. It is a religious allegory, which greatly displeased the religious authorities in Egypt. Thus was the State Cinema censor censored. But his political antennae were sharp, and he always had a sense of what was possible in Egypt, at any time.

You will recall that, in 1989, Ayatollah Khomeini issued his fatwa against Salman Rushdie, for *The Satanic Verses*. Others said, "Why not Mahfouz, too?" Egypt's "blind sheikh," Omar Abdel Rahman—whom you know as the guiding force behind the first World Trade Center attack, in 1993—was philosophical: "If this sentence had been passed on Naguib Mahfouz when he wrote *Children of the Alley*, Salman Rushdie would have realized that he had to stay within bounds."

In 1992, an Egyptian intellectual, Farag Foda, was killed by Muslim extremists. Naturally enough, police found Mahfouz's name on a list of targets. But the writer would not accept bodyguards and refused to alter his cherished routine (which included a long walk and cafés). In 1994, they got him, stabbing him through the neck. The 82-year-old Mahfouz survived, but was badly incapacitated. From his hospital room, he said, "I pray to God to make the police victorious over terrorism and to purify Egypt from this evil, in defense of people, freedom, and Islam." He also displayed a Reaganesque sangfroid and humor: When the finance minister—one of a parade of officials—came in, he quipped, "I've paid my taxes."

Naguib Mahfouz

DARREN GYGI

What about Mahfouz and Islam? In his Nobel Lecture, he tells the assembled grandees—through a proxy, for he did not travel to Stockholm—that he is "the son of two civilizations": the Pharaonic and the Islamic. Concerning the latter, he will not talk of its "conquests, which have planted thousands of minarets" all over the world; nor will he talk about "the fraternity between religions and races" that has been made possible by Islam, thanks to its "spirit of tolerance" unprecedented in all human history.

That is something to ponder, before going on.

No, he will "introduce" this civilization to the Stockholm audience by telling a story: After Muslims defeated Byzantines in a battle, they would return Byzantine prisoners only in exchange for "a number of books of the ancient Greek heritage in philosophy, medicine, and mathematics." This, in spite of the fact that "the demander was a believer in God" while what was demanded was the "fruit of a pagan civilization."

So, by Mahfouz's testimony, this was Islam, in its essence: generous, all-embracing, and humane. Later in his lecture, he undertook to speak for the whole Third World (and, frankly, there is a lot of claptrap in this text, especially concerning black Africans and Palestinians). Mahfouz told the West, "Be not spectators to our miseries. You have to play therein a noble role befitting your status. From your position of superiority, you are responsible for any misdirection of animal, or plant, to say nothing of Man, in any of the four corners of the world."

THE BAD WITH THE GOOD

This view is taken by many people, both in the West and without. But what would Mahfouz have to say in October 2001, when President Bush—not being a "spectator"—went after the Taliban, that prime inflicter of misery? Mahfouz wrote that the "so-called war on terrorism" was "just as despicable a crime" as the 9/11 attacks. He repeated the woeful argument that counterattacks "give terrorism additional justification." But worse—worse—was to come later: when he defended, excused, and flat-out glorified the suicide bombers in Israel.

That burst my bubble, as you might imagine. And it reinforced an old lesson: not to fall in love, personally, with writers or artists you admire. To put it succinctly, divorce, if you can, *Parsifal* from the man (or celebrate the *Parsifal* in the man, while rejecting what is ugly). At the time of the Afghan war, NATIONAL REVIEW observed sadly that Mahfouz was "only the latest in a long line of dazzling artists who have sided with the barbarians." I tried to console myself with the thought that the writer was 90 and perhaps out of it, or that he had succumbed to some terrible pressure, or that he had been brainwashed by vile media. After all, the U.S. and its allies—including Israel—were confronting the very forces that had plunged a knife into his neck!

Nevertheless: For many, many years, Naguib Mahfouz represented an older, enlightened Arab culture, one that has been little in evidence lately. He was cultivation, not fanaticism and blood. Egypt is very proud of him—the most famous Arab writer—and well it should be: They gave him a military funeral, his coffin draped with the Egyptian flag. But Mahfouz was a writer for all the world, as the White House recognized when it lauded him on his death. (The U.S. also offered hospital treatment during Mahfouz's final illness, according to Egyptian television.)

I have no doubt that, sometime in the future, I will go back to those marvelous books—that one big book, really—forgetting, or remembering less, what was ugly in Mahfouz. And I will renew my acquaintance with al-Sayyid Ahmad, Amina, Umm Hanafi, Yasin, Khadija, Fahmy, Aisha, Kamal, and all the other characters who thrilled me—with whom I lived and died—in the final weeks of the 2000 campaign. **NR**

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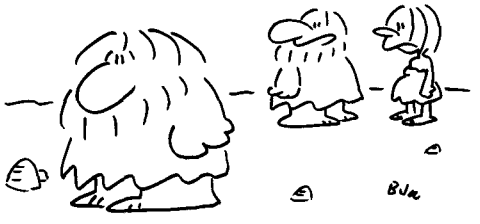
HELP!!!!

Liberals on Iran

They favor talks; mullahs do, too.
The heavy water Persians brew
Disturbs them, but they're betting talk—
Which didn't save the last Great Auk
Or France's Third Republic—beats
Swallowing something that repeats.
From where I sit, there's no Churchill
To give this lot a kick uphill.

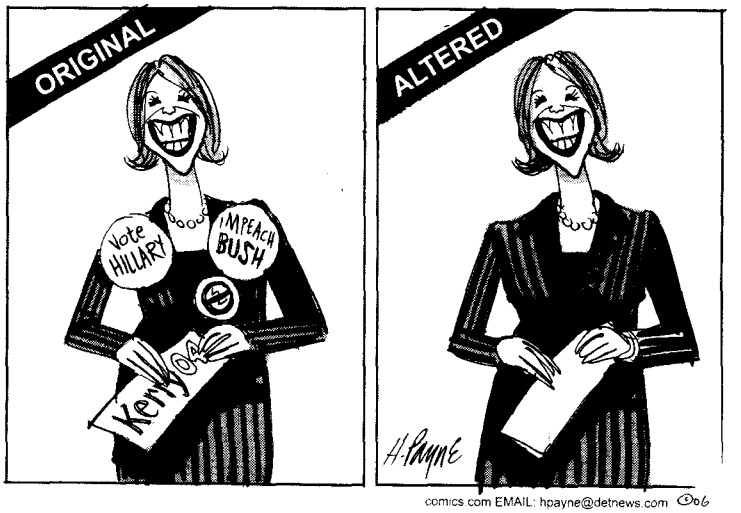
—W. H. von Dreele



"The poor guy—he was FEMA director in Atlantis."

NO LONGER HOLDING WATER

KATIE COURIC, DIGITALLY ALTERED



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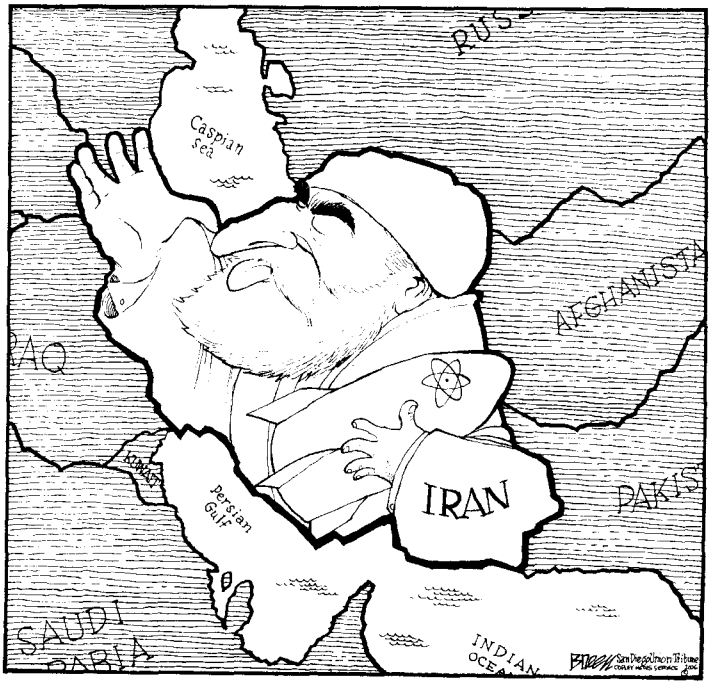

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the long view

ROB LONG

Focus Group Results: October 19th, 2006

"CBS Evening News with Katie Couric"

What follows is a summary of the results of our extensive focus-group testing on Katie Couric's first month as host of the "CBS Evening News." As you can see from the raw data (appended), her initial positives were quite solid, but there was some negative feedback on some coverage, a few of her segments (especially the "Katie Kooks With . . ." newsmaker-cooking segment), and the overall tone of the show.

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS:

The overall impression of the show was extremely favorable with viewers in the desirable 60–95 age bracket. Female viewers especially liked the way she "used some makeup on her face," and some of them mentioned that the show "was loud enough finally" to really hear and enjoy. In addition, a whopping 88 percent of this demographic really responded to the larger font size on the on-screen graphics, and the bold use of color. "So much chatter and goings-on in the dayroom," one of them commented, "it's nice to be able to finally see something."

Males in the highly coveted 85–92 age range especially liked her wardrobe. "Just the right mix of sugar and spice," one commented.

Younger viewers—those in the 60–65 age range—were delighted by the cheerful tone of the broadcast, which suggests that the network strategy of lightening the tone to appeal to younger, more dynamic viewers has succeeded.

Females and males in the difficult 90–95 age range reported falling asleep during the first half of the broadcast, which is a net benefit as it is likely that their sets will remain tuned to CBS for the duration of the evening's programming, resulting in an overall lift of CBS primetime household numbers.

Breaking it down segment by segment:

OPENING TITLE SEQUENCE:

This is perhaps the most problematic part of the broadcast, as 73 percent of our sample reported being "alarmed" and "confused" by the urgent new theme music. Several reported dialing 9-1-1 after seeing Couric appear on the screen. On the other hand, Couric's gentle, friendly demeanor reminded other viewers of their best friend from childhood, which resulted in dementia and/or pleasant reverie for the duration of the broadcast. Suggest different music, and perhaps a more specific introduction for our key audience, something along the lines of, "And now here's Katie Couric, who is NOT your mother in 1943," which could perhaps be flashed occasionally on the screen.

KATIE KOOKS WITH:

This segment is a real problem for the show. The idea of having Katie cook something with a newsmaker—in our test broadcast, this was former secretary of state Colin Powell—may appeal to the younger, hipper viewers in the 45–60 age bracket, but our target audience of 60–95 finds it hard to follow. A portion of the sample (32 percent) were confused enough to believe that they had actually eaten the meal prepared on the television, and reported that the food was too spicy and upset their stomachs, which, of course, is unlikely but nonetheless significant. In addition, a whopping 89 percent of our sample mentioned that as the broadcast is seen at 6:30 P.M.—a full two hours after they have eaten dinner—there is little interest in seeing a meal prepared. Another segment of our sample was simply lost, and thought that the "large Negro gentleman and the funny little blonde" were a married couple in a new sitcom. Suggest eliminating "Katie Kooks With . . ." as a segment of the show.

INSIDE YOUR COLON:

This segment scored across all demographic groups in the 60–95 range. It was our highest-rated segment. Suggest moving it to the top of the show.

AMERICA FACES TERRORISM:

This segment was problematic. Of course, America does face a terrorism threat, and a discussion of it is appropriate and necessary for any news broadcast. And yet, our viewership, 27 percent of which is non-ambulatory, becomes unduly panicked and agitated by most of the news items in this general category. Viewers in the crucial 70–88 age range reported heart palpitations, anxiety, and irrational anger directed at (for some reason) Guatemalans. Suggest making this segment a "web only" feature of the broadcast.

OVERALL SCORES:

Overall, the broadcast fared very well, and its new host scored especially high in the "reminds me of my daughter when she used to visit" category, as well as the "perky nurse" category. The broadcast has strong youth appeal—its popularity in the 65–78 age range is proof of that—and has managed to maintain its popularity with its traditional 90–98-year-old audience.

Please note that this sample was slightly skewed and had to be adjusted using standard methods due to the deaths of 23 percent of viewers during the initial broadcast.

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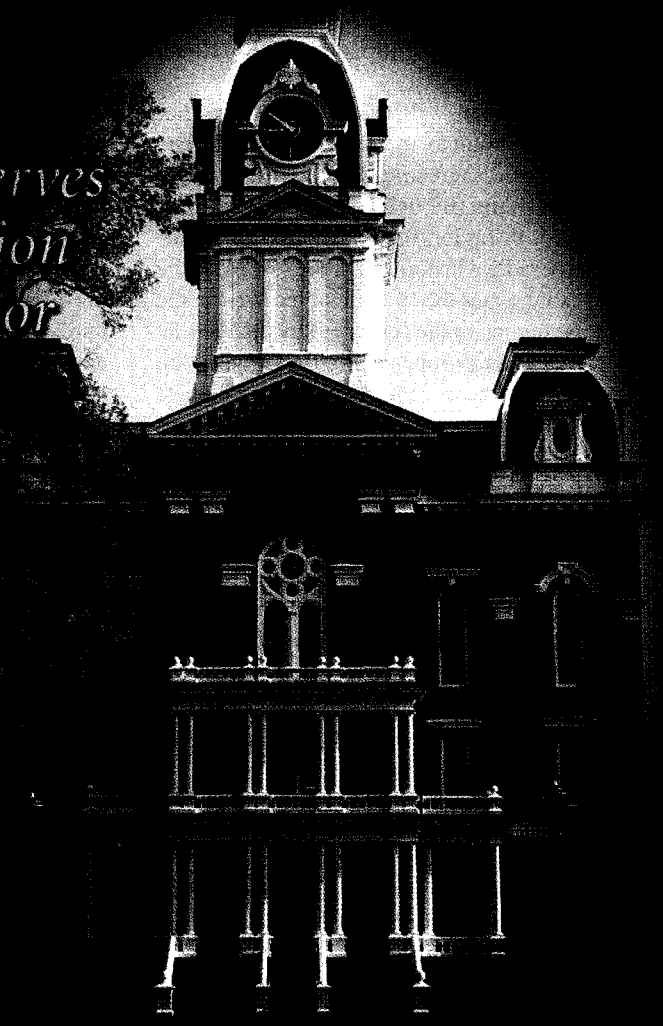

Hillsdale deserves the appreciation of all who labor for freedom.

RONALD REAGAN

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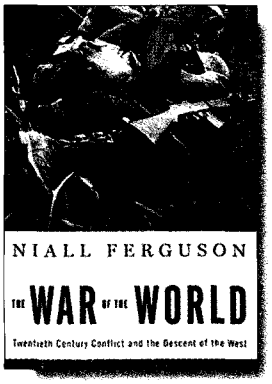
Niall's Saga



The War of the World: Twentieth-Century Conflict and the Descent of the West, by Niall Ferguson (Penguin, 880 pp., $35)

PAUL JOHNSON

NIALL FERGUSON's ponderous volume accompanies a TV series and is heavily punctuated by maps and statistical tables. Covering the 20th century, it starts in 1904 when, for the first time, an Asian power (Japan) defeated a European (really Eurasian) one (Russia); and it concludes by arguing that the real loser in the century was the West, and the real winner Asia, or more specifically the two population giants, India and China. The book also seeks to analyze the horrific record of violence during the century and tries to explain it by a complex psychosexual theory which I found difficult to follow.

Ferguson is good at writing big books, organizing a mass of historical detail and telling figures in a readable way. *The War of the World* certainly ought to be widely circulated, though it reminds me of the notorious exchange between the clever advocate, F. E. Smith, and the stupid judge. Judge: "I have listened carefully to your case, Mr. Smith, and I am none the wiser." Smith: "Possibly not, my Lord, but certainly better informed." One emerges from the book much better informed about the details but no clearer about the underlying causes of the cosmic disaster.

Ferguson will not be surprised that readers want to argue with him. Indeed he invites disagreement by his provocative assertions (he belongs to the school of A. J. P. Taylor, the notoriously provocative radical historian). In the first place, he exaggerates the strength of the West at the beginning of the century, if by the West he means its European core. In the years up to 1914 the three powers with the highest growth rates were Japan, Russia (especially non-European Russia, including the Caucasus), and America. Europe looked stronger than it was because of the vast territories of its (chiefly African) empires, but these were often a source of weakness, as was unforgettably demonstrated by Britain's misadventure of the Boer War. The empires were more important than any other factor in preventing European powers from acting in concert, and it was not until they were liquidated that the European Union could be founded.

Niall Ferguson argues that the real loser in the century was the West, and the real winner Asia.

As for Ferguson's contention that Asia has emerged the real victor of the 20th century, that is an easy guess to make at this stage, when both India and China are achieving spectacular growth rates. But it is the next quarter century that will provide the test. Long-term sustained growth, with all that flows from it in power and prosperity, depends on a tradition of freedom and individualism that produces entrepreneurial innovation. The lack of this tradition in Japan meant that she was unable, in the last quarter of the 20th century, to sustain the high growth achieved in the third quarter: The Japanese "miracle" underwent a diminuendo into near stagnation.

China, with a Communist regime that punishes individualism beyond a certain point, may go the same way as Japan, especially as she has chosen to achieve high growth mainly through old-style smokestack industries and low-cost manufacture of basic consumer goods. High-tech experimentation remains exclusively in the hands of the state, and what good did that do the old Soviet Union in terms of prosperity? India is likely to do better because it inherited the English tradition of personal freedom and is concentrating on the advanced industries and processes radiating from the revolution in communications. That seems to be a much better bet than China's sledgehammer strategy. And India does not suffer from the stultifying conformism of the Japanese elites who are terrified of getting out of step. On the other hand it has the burden of a bureaucratic tradition that has spawned anything up to 30 million desk-wallahs and generates more paperwork than the rest of the free world in its entirety.

My guess, unlike Ferguson's, is that by mid-21st century, the U.S.A. will still be the world's strongest and richest power, and have a population of 420 million—not too far behind India and China, whose population growth is decelerating very fast. In the 140 years between the end of the Civil War and the present, America's record of growth is impressive and the central factor in sustaining it is the high degree of freedom and individuality in society, politics, the media, the universities, and commercial competition. So long as America retains these assets, her performance is likely to remain formidable, and the degree to which India and China follow American patterns of freedom will determine their dynamism. Indeed, one point that strikes me, reading Ferguson's book, is the element of continuity despite all the tremendous shocks of the 20th century. At its beginning the City of London was the financial center of the world. In 2006 it is still remarkable how much of the world's money is processed in London; indeed, finance is now by far Britain's largest and most successful industry.

What about the violence and moral ignominy on which Ferguson rightly places so much stress? Though some of his

Mr. Johnson is the author most recently of *Creators: From Chaucer and Dürer to Picasso and Disney*.

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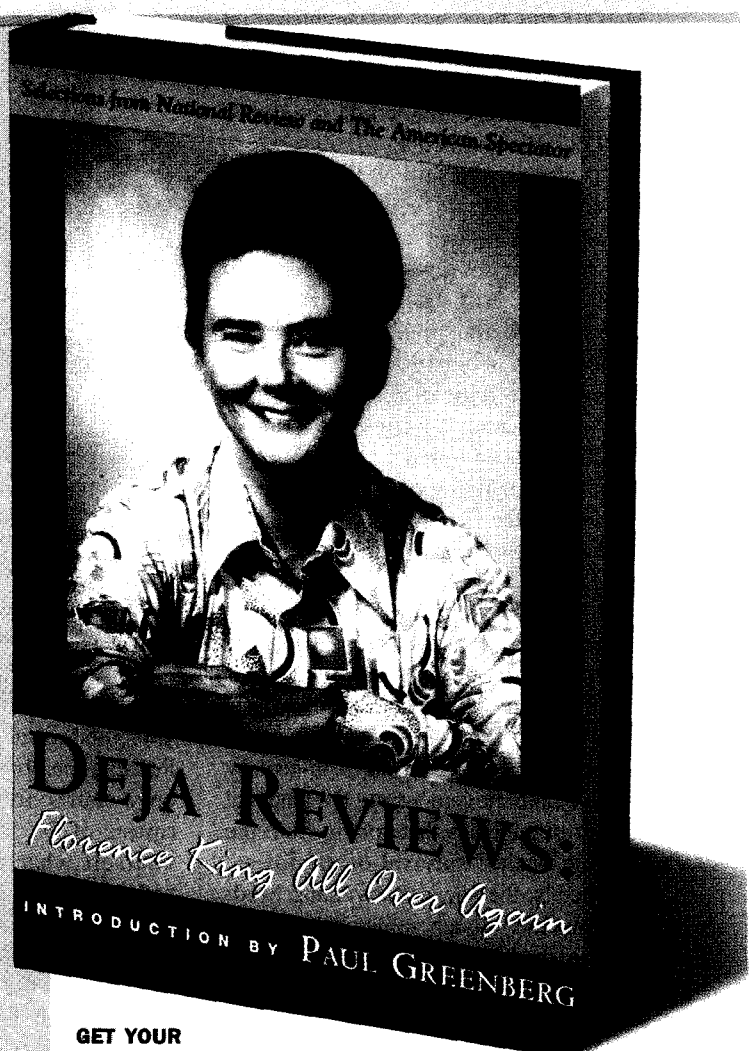
A must for any fan, *Deja Reviews* includes classic essays such as "A Wasp Looks at Lizzie Borden" and "South Mouth: Why Liberals Hate Dixie"—plus 59 book reviews, the *milieu* where Miss King's talents are on their most glorious display. Pulitzer Prize-winner Paul Greenberg said it best in his insightful introduction: "my favorite part of this collection may be the book reviews. Florence King's specialty is the good review of a bad book. It would be hard, it might be impossible, to top this opening paragraph of one such review:

> Back in the Cold War, whenever I had to review an unreadable book, I always comforted myself with the thought, 'Maybe the Russians will drop the Bomb and I won't have to finish reading this.' Those were the days. This time, stuck with *A Pilgrim's Way: The Personal Story of the Episcopal Bishop Charged with Heresy for Ordaining a Gay Man Who Was in a Committed Relationship*, by the Rt. Rev. Walter C. Righter, author of the longest subtitle in publishing history, all I could hope for was an asteroid.

Boy, can she *write!* And as for asteroids, you'll wish you'd been struck by one if you don't take advantage of this special pre-publication offer. Order your copies today of *Deja Reviews: Florence King All Over Again* for only $24.95 each, direct from *NR* (they won't be in bookstores till 2007!). They'll be shipped to you—free of charge!—in early October. And for a limited time we're offering autographed copies of *Deja Reviews* for only $34.95. To get your Florence-signed copies (they'll make great gifts for curmudgeon fans!), check the appropriate box on the order coupon and include on a separate sheet how and to whom you want your books inscribed.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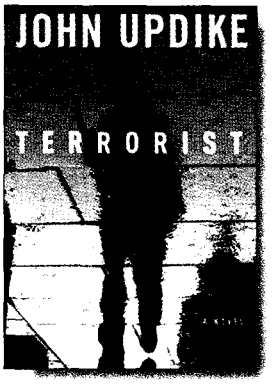
analysis is plausible, I think he fails to identify the role of secularization. The three big killer regimes of the 20th century—Hitler's Reich, Stalin's Soviet Union, and Mao's Red China, which slaughtered (at least) 120 million between them—were all stridently secular and anti-religious. So were most of the minor killer-regimes, like Pol Pot's Cambodia.

It is also significant that the origins of modern genocide are secular. Holy Russia had always permitted a degree of violent anti-Semitism but it was the increasingly secularized czarist state of the 1880s that systematized the pogroms. This was echoed, from about 1909, by the secular Young Turks regime in Turkey, which introduced genocide against the Armenians then and, on a much larger scale, in 1915; this was followed by similar genocide against the Greek minority under the secular dictator Kamal Ataturk. There was a re-echo in Soviet Russia, where Stalin employed race-removal and genocidal policies from the late 1920s.

Hitler's brand of Viennese anti-Semitism, with its stress on ridding Germany of the "bacillus" of Jewish moral disease, had its roots in the 19th-century public-health movement and the fanatical interest in eugenics that sprang from the doctrine of the "survival of the fittest" preached by the Social Darwinians. Modern genocide, though sometimes colored with old-fashioned religious prejudice, was (and is) essentially secular. The kind of eugenics preached by Shaw and Wells long before the rise of Hitler did not exclude the elimination of the unfit. Even the kind of anti-Semitic and anti-white genocide advocated by the present Iranian regime is only superficially Islamic: Its fundamental drive is secular power-politics.

The lesson of the 20th century, in my view, is that humanity, even with religious restraints, is a force for horror as well as progress. Without them, its turpitude knows no bounds. I recall the somber words of the Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner: "If ever belief in God disappears, and the image of God is eradicated from human minds, we will become nothing more than incredibly clever apes—and the ultimate fate of humanity will be too horrible to contemplate." **NR**

Jihad on the Turnpike



Terrorist,
by John Updike
(Knopf, 320 pp., $24.95)

TRACY LEE SIMMONS

To praise John Updike ought to require what the lawyers call standing. You should be in a position to bestow it—that is, your good words should be worth a damn. Praising the obviously accomplished not only courts presumption, inviting the riposte of Dr. Johnson, "Consider with yourself what your flattery is worth, before you bestow it so freely"; it's also a great bore. Still, one is tempted to dive into the cyber-vaults of LEXIS/NEXIS and pour out the borrowed, syrupy encomia as thickly as possible and claim the sentiments as one's own. But sometimes they are one's own.

John Updike, to put a fine point on it, has been the chronicler of the American promise for half a century, perhaps the most consequential writer of fiction in our time. Among all contemporary authors, he is most the journeyman, writing to and for the moment, but without the pedestrian attitude; he looks above, below, and beyond the surfaces. Within the pages of well over 50 books in as many years, ranging from fiction to poetry to literary and art criticism, this consummate craftsman has, with daring and élan, held up a mirror to both America's ideals and its illusions. Although he has described a peculiar radiance vibrating in the American soul—with a sense of immense, latent potential and idealistic faith in a Better Tomorrow—some of what he has shown us about ourselves has not been flattering. But then we wouldn't expect an artist to flatter. However much he has turned over the rocks of our character to reveal what lies teeming and writhing beneath, his confidence in an essential goodness and vibrancy about America and its people doesn't seem to flag.

"The inner spaces that a good story lets us enter," Updike has said, "are the old apartments of religion," and he has signed a long lease on them. He takes religion seriously and always has. No matter what he's explored in the way of social manners and mores, not to mention what happens behind the shutters, man's quest for transcendence, for a higher meaning beyond the passing scene—ultimately for God—has always played the same role in his fiction as a *basso ostinato* does in music, a haunting line rumbling along below the tripping, twittering themes quivering in the air above, yet holding everything together; it's always there, often more felt than heard, or, to switch senses, less the light seen than the light seen by. Now he enters those old apartments of religion again, but this time through a very different door.

Nobody has ever accused the *au courant* Updike of a disinclination to be topical, but with his new novel, *Terrorist*, he's taken topicality to a dark, all too current place. This book is a bold literary effort to come to terms with the post-9/11 world, which has been for America a deadly face-off with the Other: a force for utter, all-out barbarity, comprehensible to Western minds only with the most taxing exertions. Yet as this force has been thrust upon our time, it's as ripe for artistic handling as any other struggle engaging the human heart, and Updike has drawn a sympathetic, if not sympathizing, picture of one slice of radical Islamic life as seen through the eyes of a New Jersey teenager.

The story revolves around Ahmad Mulloy, an 18-year-old son of an Egyptian immigrant father, who skipped out on the boy before he got to know him, and an American mother of Irish extrac-

Mr. Simmons is director of the Dow Journalism Program at Hillsdale College, and author of *Climbing Parnassus: A New Apologia for Greek and Latin.*

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tion, a nurse's aide who has raised her son as best she could by herself in New Prospect, a rusting city rife with economic discontent. Ahmad, presumably seeking a connection to his absent father—he longs to adopt his father's surname when he finishes school—finds a makeshift mosque in a shabby neighborhood and converts to Islam at the age of 11. He then slowly begins building a new enlightened self under the intense gaze of a shadowy imam, Shaikh Rashid, who instructs him in the Koran several times a week after school, admonishing him to keep to the straight road, not the wayward one laid out by the devils of American materialism and Godlessness. "I seek to walk the Straight Path," Ahmad earnestly tells a coworker. "In this country, it is not easy. There are too many paths, too much selling of many useless things. They brag of freedom, but freedom to no purpose becomes a kind of prison."

Ahmad grows into what we can only call a geeky high-school student at Central High. He holds himself stiffly aloof from his fellow students, most of whom are inner-city blacks and Hispanics marking time and living wasted lives; he steadfastly swears off drugs and partying while wearing his invariable garb of spotless, pressed white shirt and black jeans every day. He befriends a sassy black girl, Joryleen, who sings in a gospel choir, and butts up against the noisome bulk of her boyfriend, comically named, in a gesture worthy of Dickens, Tylenol Jones. The American Dream seems remote for these young people. Ahmad, like his classmates, has "tasted American plenty by licking its undersides"; he counts himself among the dispossessed. But he is a solid student with near-perfect attendance. So when a jaded guidance counselor, Jack Levy, takes a tardy interest in Ahmad's future two months before graduation, wondering why the mysterious imam has been urging him away from the college track in favor of the vocational—his destiny, it's been prayerfully decided, is to drive trucks—the plot accelerates.

Here any responsible synopsis will halt. Suffice it to say that Ahmad quickly gets caught up in a small but efficient radical underground and ignites within himself a wish to become—in Shaikh Rashid's words—a *shahid* (martyr) "whose love of God is unqualified, and who impatiently thirsts for the glory of Paradise." With dazzling memories of the burning World Trade Towers (barely visible from the heights of New Prospect a few years before) still vivid in his soldier's heart, he gets recruited and groomed as a homegrown terrorist to carry out more holy acts of destruction on American soil in pursuit of the international jihad against pretty much everybody not beguiled by radical Islam's hatreds.

The rest of the story moves quickly, inexorably, to its end, engendering more than a few palpitations in the alert reader. Updike is not known as a writer of page-turning thrillers, but he has plotted *Terrorist* in such a way that, for once, we are not as taken with his trademark observations and well-turned reveries—Updike's famous exfoliations—as we are with our eagerness to discover what happens. Yet the author is never less than himself. His prose still delights occasionally with its reticulated, baroque grandeur, though this book is written far more simply than most of his are. And the atmosphere he creates is incandescent, throwing light on the dark, interior universe of alien minds and the pungent exotica of Islamist beliefs.

Most impressively, he manages to make a terrorist, admittedly young and gullible, a sympathetic subject. We can hate the deeds dreamt of, but not so much the dreamer. That's the sweet trap. For no matter how many of the militantly arcane lessons offered up by his imam he takes on board, Ahmad remains a queerly admirable fellow, as Updike is disturbingly adept at taking us into his questing, if rigidly misguided, spirit. This is not a feat most novelists could perform.

"Dreams come true," Updike has written elsewhere, for "without that possibility, nature would not incite us to have them." Here we're reminded of just how nightmarish some of those dreams can be. Once again he explores religion with its many comforts and contradictions—but this time he also spins out the consequences of a religious faith hopelessly perverted and dangerously obscure to those who don't share it. It's a horrific tale he weaves, one all the more dreadful for being plausible. **NR**

Two Cheers For Politics

A World beyond Politics? A Defense of the Nation-State, by Pierre Manent (Princeton, 228 pp., $35)

BRIAN C. ANDERSON

In this dazzling book, French political philosopher Pierre Manent tries to provide an "impartial overview of the political order—or disorder—of today's world." Few living thinkers could hope to pull off such an ambitious undertaking, but Manent is surely one. In earlier works, including *An Intellectual History of Liberalism*, *Tocqueville and the Nature of Democracy*, and *The City of Man*, this former student of Raymond Aron excavated the deep intellectual sources of modernity in the writings of Hobbes, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Tocqueville, Smith, and other great minds, with whom he effortlessly converses. In *A World beyond Politics?*—which is based on lectures delivered several years ago at Paris's prestigious Institute of Political Studies—Manent shifts his emphasis from intellectual archeology to spiritual topography: What does it mean to be a citizen of a present-day liberal democracy?

Not that Manent abandons the long view. To understand the modern liberal world, he argues, you need to see how it emerged—in the ideas of the philosophers

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first, then in practice—along the "theological-political vector" of Western history. To escape priestly political authority and religious warfare, liberal societies sought to disconnect religion (and even strongly held opinions of the good) from politics. Politics would no longer focus on ideal ends; these would now be considered private concerns in civil society. Instead, politics would seek to secure the best conditions to meet *needs* and protect *rights*. Men could thus busy themselves making some cash, cultivating their property, and pursuing happiness as they saw it instead of butchering one another over clashing conceptions of the good. Liberal modernity would arise on "low but solid ground," as the philosopher Leo Strauss famously observed.

The bourgeois order, born with the Enlightenment and the national political revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries, has offered "the most stable, therefore the most satisfying putting into practice of political liberty that humanity has ever known," Manent rightly points out. But it has faced fierce critics. Because it separates power from opinion, especially religious opinion, the liberal regime frustrates a natural instinct to see our highest ideals reflected in political life. It is, in this sense, permanently dissatisfying. It invites utopian efforts to do it in and replace it with a pure "politics of meaning." The two deadliest threats to liberal democracy—Communism and National Socialism—were monstrous, hyper-political projects of this kind, Manent says. The Islamist terrorists who struck on 9/11 represent another.

The liberal regime invites utopian efforts to do it in and replace it with a pure 'politics of meaning.'

A subtler threat to liberal democracy seeks to leave politics behind entirely, to embody a universal civilization of pure rights or commerce. Manent sees this post-political trend at work in the European Union, at least in its current form. Aristotle described citizenship as an act of putting forth words and deeds in a common space. But Europeans don't know what they share, in that common space: They forge new shared institutions but leave the old national ones still in place, creating a bizarre "juxtaposition of old and new institutions" that guarantees maximum confusion and political alienation. Even the EU's territorial boundaries—essential to all forms of politics—remain blurry. Should the EU include Turkey? Russia? Where does one draw the line? Who's the boss?

Manent believes that the EU project is, in its own way, as utopian as the 20th-century totalitarianisms. To be real, democracy "needs a *body*, a population marked out by borders and other characteristics, namely a *defined* realm." The nation-state, discredited in Europe by the brutality of megalomaniacal national*ism*—gave democracy a body. Europe's dream of tossing the nation on history's dust heap is understandable, given the history of the 20th century. But what "political form" takes its place? Unless the EU becomes a kind of United States of Europe, with clear territorial limits and a will to act politically—so far utterly missing except when it is thwarting the United States—its woolly, confused nature ensures collapse. The EU's anti-political drift is most evident in its hallucinatory belief that war is obsolete and that all conflict can give way to rational negotiation and consensus. The lessons of history—including Europe's own recent history in the Balkans—tell otherwise.

A conservative, Manent is keenly aware of modern democracy's discontents. A defining feature of our societies, he observes, is to make man "the sovereign author, in fact and by right, of the human world." Back in the old days, you got up in the morning, looked around, and saw bonds everywhere: your mother-in-law lived, if not under your roof, then right next door; the church told you what to do; you had duties, duties, duties. This moral density defined men and women, shaped their lives. It could also be a burden, of course. The "logic" of democracy, as Manent calls it, loosened these thick attachments—and hasn't stopped loosening them. "Democracy aims to have its citizens go from a life that one suffers, receives, and inherits to a life that one wills. Democracy makes all relations and all bonds voluntary."

Sounds liberating—and in many ways it *is* liberating. But there's been a cost, too, increasingly evident in recent decades. "The empire of consent spreads, the process of individualization intensifies, and thus the authority of the communities of different orders in which human beings hitherto found the meaning of their life—the nation, the family, the church—declines more and more each day," Manent maintains. The family becomes optional, a mere voluntary association. Church becomes the place where one "tentatively looks for meaning, no longer where one receives it." Patriotism becomes a laughable relic. Pushed to excess, this process culminates in a Sartrean existentialism, where nothing—not even my own voluntary agreements, like, say, my marriage—means anything unless, right now, this instant, it means something to *me*. All that is solid melts into air, as the saying goes.

Accompanying the empire of consent, somewhat paradoxically, is the modern liberal demand that all my choices receive "respect." But this renders freedom empty, purposeless. "If all choices must be approved by everyone, life would become truly boring and even sinister, for that would mean that our own personal choic-

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es are without importance or meaning," says Manent. "The choice I make can have no value for me unless you react to that choice, with approval or disapproval, even indignation or comprehension."

Still, this nihilism is only a tendency of modern life, not a fate. The old order was not as oppressive to liberty as sometimes thought: Marriage in Christian Europe, for instance, always rested on the principle of consent. Similarly, thick attachments remain an active possibility in our free societies. "In the new democratic order, free personal searching is now a right but it can lead to deep and lasting adherences, whether it be the formation of a couple or participation in a religious or other type of community." Ordered liberty isn't out of date. We all still argue, too, about right and wrong ways to live.

The prudential "art" of democracy, Manent advises, striking a very Tocquevillian note, is to correct for the relativizing tendencies of democratic modernity—and to do so without succumbing to the potentially abusive temptation to prop up any one experience or worldview as civically absolute. A healthy democratic politics is vital in this regard. Such a politics, he writes, "prevents any experience from saturating the social arena and the individual consciousness; it requires any experience to coexist and communicate with the other experiences. In this way, politics is the guardian of the wealth and complexity of human life." There is in Manent a classical sense of politics as architectonic, and of human nature as in some sense political. Religion (Manent is a believing Catholic), a decent, informed love of the nation, and a renewed commitment to classical education can also help moderate the individualizing trends of liberal modernity, getting our heads out of our navels.

The reader will find much more of interest in this heady book: meditations on egalitarianism, modern art, the French novel, sexual identity, science and faith, the French and American revolutions, the morality of international relations—on and on, all delivered in Manent's glistening prose, ably translated by Marc LePain. American conservatives shouldn't ignore *A World beyond Politics?* despite their aversion to all things French these days. It's an ideal introduction to political philosophy in the new millennium. **NR**

■ SHELF LIFE ■

God Is in The DNA

MICHAEL POTEMRA

A BOOK many of us consider sacred provides one account of reality; evidence assembled by subsequent exertions of the human intellect provides another. There's only one truth; and therefore, our adversarial culture insists, one of these two accounts must be driven from the field in humiliation and defeat. The confrontation between science and religion has only become more vitriolic in recent years—so it's heartening to find that one of America's finest minds is trying to point our way out of the dark rancor. Francis S. Collins is both head of the Human Genome Project and a believing Christian, and his new book—***The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*** (Free Press, 294 pp., $26)—is a valuable attempt to reconcile these two essential human endeavors.

In Collins's view, "there is no conflict in being a rigorous scientist and a person who believes in a God who takes a personal interest in each one of us." Man *qua* scientist explores nature; man *qua* religious believer worships God in the realm of spirit. Because there is but one reality, these two distinct spheres can and must be reconciled into a larger whole. "The Big Bang," writes Collins, "cries out for a divine explanation. It forces the conclusion that nature had a defined beginning. I cannot see how nature could have created itself. Only a supernatural force that is outside of space and time could have done that." It is not the province of science to prove the existence of God, but it certainly offers evidence pointing in His direction.

Nowhere is Collins's presentation more helpful than on the question of evolution. This Christian scientist is an unabashed Darwinist. "Darwin had no way of knowing what the mechanism of evolution by natural selection might be. We can now see that the variation he postulated is supported by naturally occurring mutations in DNA. . . . Darwin could hardly have imagined a more compelling digital demonstration of his theory than what we find by studying the DNA of multiple organisms." The author goes on to describe how these material mutations have diversified the number of kinds of living things—among them, man. But he continues:

> At this point, godless materialists might be cheering. If humans evolved strictly by mutation and natural selection, who needs God to explain us? To this, I reply: I do. The comparison of chimp and human sequences . . . does not tell us what it means to be human. . . . DNA sequence alone . . . will never explain certain special human attributes, such as the knowledge of the Moral Law and the universal search for God. Freeing God from the burden of special acts of creation does not remove Him as the source of the things that make humanity special, and of the universe itself. It merely shows us something of how He operates.

Collins's thought on this is close to that of John Paul II, whom he praises for striking a careful balance—simultaneously acknowledging the fact of biological evolution and recognizing that (in John Paul's words, echoing a previous teaching of Pius XII) "if the origin of the human body comes through living matter which existed previously, the spiritual soul is created directly by God." Some prominent theologians disagree with the John Paul II/Pius XII position; but that disagreement can be explained as a disappointing yet understandable overreaction to the rhetoric of village atheists who—overstepping the bounds of science—claim that evolution strikes an intellectual death-blow to belief in God. It's hard not to retreat into an us-versus-them mentality when some of the loudest and most prominent voices on the other side are lapsing in the same way.

One problem many religious believers

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have with evolutionary science is its ostensible endorsement of randomness. Collins is helpful on this question as well.

> If evolution is random, how could [God] really be in charge? . . . The solution is actually readily at hand, once one ceases to apply human limitations to God. If God is outside of nature, then he is outside of space and time. In that context, God could in the moment of creation of the universe also know every detail of the future. That could include the formation of the stars, planets, and galaxies . . . and the evolution of humans. . . . In that context, evolution could appear to us to be driven by chance, but from God's perspective the outcome would be entirely specified. Thus, God could be completely and intimately involved in the creation of all species, while from our perspective, limited as it is by the tyranny of linear time, this would appear a random and undirected process.

On reading this, many scientific reductionists will probably be thinking, *This Collins may have been a man of science earlier on, but he must have sold out to the Christian Right*—from which they will quite relievedly conclude that he can safely be ignored. But they should know that this exit isn't available to them, because Collins does not argue for any conservative agenda. He supports, for example, the controversial "therapeutic cloning" procedure strongly opposed by religious conservatives.

Further, he reserves some of his harshest criticism for the Intelligent Design movement, which he dismisses as a "God of the gaps" effort. "It now seems likely," he writes, "that many examples of irreducible complexity are not irreducible after all, and that the primary scientific argument for ID is thus in the process of crumbling. . . . Major cracks are beginning to appear, suggesting that ID proponents have made the mistake of confusing the unknown with the unknowable." (Notwithstanding Collins's strictures, it should be pointed out that the ID movement has played a positive role in intellectual life. Scientists committed to philosophical materialism are free to police the boundaries of their discipline, and declare that ID is not "science"—but those of us who are not committed a priori to this reductionist attitude should be equally free to consider the arguments and evidence adduced by the ID proponents. The important question for us is not *Is it science, as materialists define science?* but rather *Is it true?* ID may or may not have the right answers, but it is helping the culture ask the right questions.)

Collins is a principled proponent of theistic evolution—which is to say, intelligent design without the capital letters. In this great cultural clash between faith and science, I have semi-seriously desired the formation of a group called "Fundamentalists for Evolution"—people who hold the Bible sacred and also gratefully accept the evidence provided by science about the physical world. (Lest I be misunderstood, I should note that Collins is not a fundamentalist by any stretch.) This book reminds us of some very important truths: "The God of the Bible is also the God of the genome. He can be worshiped in the cathedral or in the laboratory. His creation is majestic, awesome, intricate, and beautiful—and it cannot be at war with itself. Only we imperfect humans can start such battles. And only we can end them."

■ In ***The God That Did Not Fail: How Religion Built and Sustains the West*** (Encounter, 311 pp., $25.95), Robert Royal has achieved a tour de force of intellectual history, a scintillating reinterpretation of the key cultural events of the past 25 centuries in the West. President of the Faith & Reason Institute in Washington, D.C., Royal challenges the conventional account of history as a gradual emancipation of the human spirit from religion. His account integrates the Greeks, Romans, and medievals into a "usable past" for modern liberal democracy—pointing out, among other things, that the Greek philosophers had more in common with religious believers than with secularist debunkers; that Dante, certainly the greatest poet of the Middle Ages and probably the greatest religious poet of all time, envisioned some religious leaders (popes) in Hell and some secular leaders (emperors) in Heaven; and that the efforts of Catholic officials in Paris to quash the rigorist Jansenist sect merely ended up provoking anticlericalism among Catholics. Royal draws out the lessons of these and many other events in a non-polemical way, completely without the hectoring tone that is so common in such broad cultural arguments: He has written a work of *Geistesgeschichte* that is inspiring to read, and that deserves a place on the college syllabus.

■ Irving Kristol, one of the founders of the neoconservative movement, wrote over two decades ago that "it is the self-imposed assignment of neoconservatism to explain to the American people why they are right, and to the intellectuals why they are wrong." Connoisseurs of irony can therefore wince at the fact that, today, populists of both Right and Left are united in viewing neoconservatism as the sinister ideology of a coterie of professors seeking to impose a utopian vision on a recalcitrant and innocent mass public. In ***Neoconservatism: Why We Need It*** (Encounter, 247 pp., $25.95), young author/journalist Douglas Murray seeks to rescue the neocons from the undeserved vilification. He makes a passionate case for neoconservatism as a road between, on one hand, the relativism of the Left and, on the other, the "nostalgia," "archaism," and "anachronism" of the harsher anti-neocon elements on the right: "Just as the counterculture spawned the unsavory sight of nihilism adopted as an attitude among the 'radicals' and the socialists, so, one should ask, has not the myth of decline become a free acquisition of conservatism? Has 'Owl of Minerva-ism'—the heady idea that we are living in the fading light—become the conservative nihilism?" He sees the neocon ideals expressed in President Bush's second inaugural address as the key to the eventual success of conservatism *tout court*. In the words of his book's last sentence: "With confidence in its power, knowledge of a just cause, and the myth of inevitable decline banished, the American people can reaffirm their instinctive ambition and hope, and the conservative revolution can truly begin." Murray's book is, finally, an act of hope—hope that the values that conservatives, neo- and otherwise, seek to conserve will not merely be preserved as artifacts in an imaginary museum of culture, but actually prevail on history's stage.

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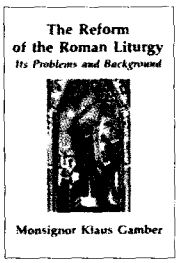
■ Kudos to Roman Catholic Books of Fort Collins, Colo., for republishing a key work of liturgical history. In ***The Reform of the Roman Liturgy: Its Problems and Background*** (198 pp., $24.95), the late Msgr. Klaus Gamber laid out with great precision the traditionalist case against many of the post–Vatican II changes in Catholic worship. What makes the volume of particular interest today is the fact that an earlier edition carried a preface by none other than then-cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. Wrote the cardinal: "What happened after the Council was [that] in the place of liturgy as the fruit of development came fabricated liturgy. We abandoned the organic, living process of growth and development over centuries, and replaced it—as in a manufacturing process—with a fabrication, a banal, on-the-spot product. Gamber, with the vigilance of a true prophet and the courage of a true witness, opposed this falsification, and, thanks to his incredibly rich knowledge, indefatigably taught us about the living fullness of a true liturgy."



That's one heck of a blurb, coming as it does from a man who presumably has the authority to implement Monsignor Gamber's ideas. One does, in fact, hear rumblings from the Vatican about major reforms in the offing—but Gamber himself pointed out one reason the changes under the new pope may not be as drastic as some conservatives wish: "Since the liturgical rite has developed over time, further development continues to be possible. But such continuing development has to respect the timeless character of all rites; and its development has to be organic in nature."

In liturgy, man confronts and adores the holiness of God. Anything that makes a liturgy appear more oriented toward human experimentation than to the encounter with the numinous devalues it in the direction of secular therapy. There is a reason some Protestants are moving toward more frequent and reverent celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy; it's the same reason many Catholics wish for reforms in their own Church, along the lines proposed by Monsignor Gamber.

■ "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:31–32). In this famous passage, St. Paul is using marriage as a metaphor to illustrate the unity of God with His people. In his new book, ***Divine Likeness: Toward a Trinitarian Anthropology of the Family*** (Eerdmans, 242 pp., $26), Marc Cardinal Ouellet, the archbishop of Quebec, reflects on a similar analogy between the relations within the Trinitarian God and the relations within Christian families: Just as God Himself is, in essence, a community of love, love is the essential bond that constitutes a human family.

Ouellet writes that "the common life of the couple in marriage and their conjugal love are . . . pervaded by Trinitarian love itself, which effuses in them its unity and fruitfulness. The couple is constituted as the domestic Church. . . . The Holy Spirit makes the couple a new reality, Trinitarian, namely a 'third' in relation to their individual persons. . . . Therefore, the couple finds itself engaged in the Trinitarian drama of the total gift of self for the other and with the other in the unity of a common fecundity." He contends that there is not just a likeness between the Trinity and the family, "but above all a mutual immanence of the two realities, a sort of circumincession which involves the family in the Trinitarian relations. . . . The Christian family is a witness to the fact that the Glory of Trinitarian communion, which shines on the face of Christ . . . , already dwells within the simplest and most concrete realities of life." The family is thus the locus in which people learn "to see God in the other. . . . This way of seeing in love allows one to discover the infinite value of the other and of oneself as the image of God, from whence flows the mystery of 'giving and receiving' divine Love in human love."

In 1960, Karol Wojtyla—the future John Paul II—published *Love and Responsibility*, a book on human intimacy that would become highly influential. Like that earlier work, Ouellet's book is dense but rewarding: an important contribution to the understanding of how God remains involved in human life, and how man participates in the life of God.

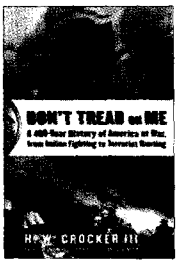
WASTED

Why do I always turn
To the page that shows Darío
In his death agony
Diminished on his bed?

It's the flesh deserves our love
And pity. The poems shine
Like marble in the mind
And have a way with death.

—RICHARD O'CONNELL

■ The War on Terror is not a fight we went looking for. It's good to remember at times like these that while it takes a lot to provoke the U.S.A., once we are provoked we put up a helluva fight—and almost always win. (As Bill Murray pointed out in *Stripes*, "We're 10-and-1!") For a rousing crash (or refresher) course on the U.S. military tradition, I recommend ***Don't Tread on Me: A 400-Year History of America at War, from Indian Fighting to Terrorist Hunting*** (Crown Forum, 464 pp., $29.95), by H. W. Crocker III. Sadly, but understandably, roughly one-fifth of the book is devoted to the Civil War: that is to say, to a purely domestic conflict in which one group of Americans killed (and were killed by) another group of Americans, because the latter insisted on the right to enslave yet a third group of Americans. (Regarding these chapters, readers should be forewarned about Crocker's pro-Southern tilt: He refers to the war as a "Northern war of aggression" and says the South "might have been . . . a liberty-loving [*sic*] agricultural Sparta.") Justice prevailed, albeit terribly; the same can be said of almost all the foreign wars Crocker so ably recounts.



■ In ***Great Philanthropic Mistakes*** (Hudson Institute, 158 pp., $14.95), Martin Morse Wooster provides some cautionary case studies in the misuse of generosity. A central problem, Wooster writes, is "arrogance on the part of program officers and foundation presidents"—grant-makers who are surrounded by flatterers and tend, over time, to develop a dangerously high regard for their own instincts. **NR**

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■ CITY DESK ■

Eats from The East

RICHARD BROOKHISER

WHEN I was young in the city, if you wanted fast Asian fare you ate Chinese. Now you eat sushi. Japan lost World War II, but it has won the grazing war. All the NYU kids and their employed elders eat in the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Chinatown used to go from Chatham Square up to Canal Street. The streets there had been laid out pre-grid, and some of them—Doyer, Mosco—had the air, short or crooked, of secrets. There were a few expansive places that rang a gong when the Peking duck came out of the kitchen. But the typical Chinatown restaurant was no-frills. You reached it down a flight of stairs. The fan in the bathroom was coated with grease and asbestos. The urinals stank. The floor was linoleum. You sat in a booth, or at a flimsy table, which, in the suburbs, would have been reserved for a child's birthday party. Poker-faced waiters—all middle-aged men—took your orders. The tea was pure Lipton's, plunked down in plain metal pots. Only the table settings attempted decoration. The chopsticks came in sleeves with printed directions for use, whose simplicity was negated by the fact that they did not actually explain how to use them. The placemats told what years A.D. were years of the dragon or the rat. The meal ended with fortune cookies. *New York* magazine once ran a contest for bogus fortunes; the winner was WISHING YOU AND YOURS A JOYOUS YOM KIPPUR.

The food was pretty good. It was heavily Cantonese. Until 1965, it was entirely so, since before then immigration from China was practically restricted to the province in which Canton is located. After 1965, immigrants and restaurants began coming from Hunan and Sichuan, though in the days of Wade-Giles, the latter was spelled Szechuan. My favorite Chinese restaurant of the old days was Cuisine of Szechuan, in which I missed eating a whole pepper thanks only to the warning shriek of my girlfriend, now my wife.

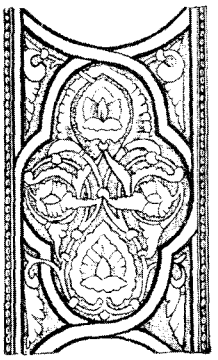
Now Chinatown, like Beijing's influence, has swollen. Little Italy, directly north of it, is a stage set—an opera, perhaps—the streets lined with Italian restaurants and touts. But the buildings all house Chinese. Yet Chinatown itself has become something of a sham. Old women the color of leather still occupy their corners, calling out *one dolla, one dolla* over boxes of bitter melons or scurrying animate fur toys, but more and more of the storefronts sell T-shirts or other generica, while more and more of the restaurants are Vietnamese or Filipino. The Chinese themselves have been moving to Queens or someplace, but they may also have shifted to other lines of work, for there is now a different fast food of choice.

Unlike Los Angeles, New York has no Japantown, for the Japanese came here after 1965, in the great national open house. So why pick only one neighborhood? Their restaurants are governed by a different aesthetic. No cheesy we-hope-you-enjoy-our-strange-customs hospitality. The sign of Japanese authenticity is table tops and counters made of natural wood. The nation of cars, cameras, and advanced robotics presents itself as an island of samurai Shakers. A few blue-and-white fish kites may not be amiss. Kids of both sexes constitute the staff—young Japanese on their *Wanderjahr*. Their work is hard because the tables are jammed together like bathroom tiles. Unless the restaurant is very small—and some Japanese places are true holes in the wall—precious space will be consumed by the sushi bar. The establishment makes up for the loss by lining the bar with stools where the patrons cluster like birds on a wire.

The food is good or bad depending on whether you like raw. There are cooked dishes—this or that teriyaki, soups, noodles. But the main attraction is sushi, raw fish or crustaceans sliced and rolled with rice, seaweed, or avocado, and served with ginger and hot mustard. Sushi combines piquant condiments with prime seafood the size of scraps. It is little packages of daintiness and chum. It is the ideal food for sharks who watch the Food Network.

Why has this fare ousted Chinese? Three factors explain the shift. First, the Chinese restaurant was family friendly. Children sat at those flimsy children's tables (the Chinese ones always behaved). One of the sweet moments of *Portnoy's Complaint* is a memory of going from Jersey to Chinatown, where the children of Israel were allowed to eat shrimp, according to the maternal lawgiver. The Japanese restaurant, by contrast, is for singles, dates, DINKs. The cramped quarters mimic the shared apartments they come from. You couldn't stuff a baby carriage in there. What will they eat when they move to Brooklyn and start families of their own? Probably still Japanese, out of habit. It will be too late to woo them to Hunan Palace.

Second, Chinese food is cooked. Going to a Chinese restaurant was a night out for people who cooked themselves. No flame touches the dockside treats of Seppuku. Bites of chilled, squirmy salmon or tuna seem like just the thing for people who don't know how to boil water. If you have to order in, the little take-out boxes look just fine in the cavernous, empty refrigerator.



Third, the form that Japanese culinary dominance takes is appropriate to an age when strange is not strange. Chinatowns, in New York and elsewhere, flourished during the time of Charlie Chan. A quarter of the globe went from pigtails straight to "The East Is Red," with only the briefest stop at Chiang Kai-shek. Chinese food was enticing, amusing, or unsatisfying, but definitely exotic. Japan was exotic once too, when Toshiro Mifune played in art houses. But now, when every suburban kid spends junior year of high school abroad, and every young hipster grows up with manga and anime, the Japanese restaurant is one more pit stop. Add quick, cold, and uncomfortable, and it's just like home. **NR**

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on the right

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

The Terrorists Ride High

NEW YORK, AUGUST 25

RETURNING vacationers will not be without a security story, and I am no exception. At the little country airport were five functionaries, two of whom, as it happened, knew me and my work but—a curious exercise of formalism—required me at flight time to fish out yet again my driver's license, so that they could pretend to focus on the photo reassuring them that the gentleman they had been talking with was not an impostor faking a passable resemblance.

Then in came the inspector. He satisfied himself that there was nothing hidden in my shoes, but turned to my toilet case with avaricious curiosity. Do you remember Adolphe Menjou? It was he, the tidy hair, the hairline moustache, and, always, the little smile. He picked out perhaps 12 items that fell under the proscribed rubric, each containing a substance squishy (toothpaste) or liquid (shampoo). He swept the dangerous objects into a large, and presumably bomb-proof, canister, bound for a demolition center.

A few days later, I was told by my cosmopolitan son that such vicissitudes were not to be complained about given that we are at war, and ought not even to be noticing minor impositions. One doesn't dismiss lightly the judgments of one's children, but an evening's rest restored mind and body, bringing me to say: The ordeal of plane travel is properly viewed as a broken window. The idea of the broken window greatly illuminated criminology when James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling reasoned that the neglect of a broken window signified the probable neglect of an adjoining skyscraper.

What we need to accept is the challenge of passenger security, because if we reduce it to looking for toothpaste, the terrorists have achieved what they desire to achieve, the activation of fear.

Suppose that in order to get from home to work you had to make your way past vicious dogs, going diagonally first left, then right. Granted, the dogs are chained and can't get to you if you follow carefully the indicated path. But your need to do this signifies the success of the dogs as agents of terror. It's only when the forces of peace and stability remove the dogs that you are truly shielded from concern.

The war against toothpaste intimidation can be won only by the application of intelligence. If it is intelligent to open passengers' bags and remove the shaving cream, then it is even more intelligent to wave the passenger on when you can reasonably do so, confident that the shaving cream isn't going to constitute a weapon of destruction. It is already, as things stand, a weapon of terror.

The only way to foil terrorists is to contrive sensible means to gainsay their plots, real or hypothetical. The objective is to ascertain whether John Jones, carrying his medicine kit on board, is conceivably going to use something in that kit to bring down the plane. We are frozen with concern over instruments of potential destruction rather than agents of destruction. An armory of nuclear weapons that a mere finger's touch could cause to detonate is absolutely safe if the only finger with access is that of an FBI agent trained in security.

The science of security is not inherently mysterious. We need to know something about individual passengers who board a plane. A start on this is done when you are asked to give your name. That, obviously, is only the beginning. The computer wants to know more about you, and from a properly stocked computer an official can learn—asymptotically, i.e., never attaining to absolute knowledge—what are the chances that you would want to blow up an airplane.

Ask yourself the obvious questions, and quickly you arrive at million-to-one levels of probability, which are a lot more reliable than the discovery of toothpaste in your bag. If it is unearthed that the passenger in question is a male Muslim between ages 15 and 25, then go ahead and look through his medicine kit. In failing to take into account the resources of science, we hand to the terrorists every day successes in thousands of airports.

What If We Left?

NEW YORK, AUGUST 29

THE wires are heavy with the question of Iraq. The defeat of Senator Lieberman in the Democratic primary in Connecticut was a call to outright defiance by Democrats running for reelection. They have been warned now, by the unforgiving, that they must reject the war in Iraq and labor with the single end in mind of returning American troops and dissolving U.S. commitments.

Arguments are made for staying in and completing the mission. Norman Podhoretz, writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, does his illuminating best to make the case. NATIONAL REVIEW posts a symposium giving the views of a half dozen students of the contest. *The Weekly Standard* publishes a robust defense of the Iraq venture written by William J. Stuntz, who is a professor at Harvard Law School. He reminds his readers that in 1968 Eugene McCarthy practically defeated incumbent president Lyndon Johnson in the New Hampshire primary, bringing on the end of his presidency. "On any plausible scale of strategic value," Professor Stuntz writes, "Iraq today easily beats Vietnam in the late 1960s or Korea in the early 1950s. America has three enemies in the Middle East today: secular or Sunni Baathism, violent Sunni jihadism, and violent Shiite jihadism. . . . All three are dangerous because all have imperial ambitions; each seeks not control of a small piece of Middle Eastern real estate but regional hegemony—even, in the case of the jihadists, world domination. Needless to say, all three hate the West."

The moral argument can't be conclusive, and nobody is arguing that it is. But it isn't right to ignore it. Here is how it figured in another context.

"I am convinced that [ours] is one of

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the most unjust wars that has ever been fought in the history of the world. Our involvement . . . has torn up the Geneva Accord. It has strengthened the military industrial complex; it has strengthened the forces of reaction in our nation. It has put us against the self-determination of a vast majority of the [native] people, and put us in the position of protecting a corrupt regime that is stacked against the poor. It has played havoc with our domestic destinies. We are spending $500,000 to kill every [enemy] soldier . . . while we spend only $53 a year for every person characterized as poverty-stricken in the so-called poverty program, which is not even a good skirmish against poverty.

"Not only that, it has put us in a position of appearing to the world as an arrogant nation. And here we are 10,000 miles away from home, fighting for the so-called freedom of the [native] people, when we have not even put our own house in order. The judgment of God is upon us today. And we could go right down the line and see that something must be done—and something must be done quickly. We have alienated ourselves from other nations so we end up morally and politically isolated in the world. There is not a single major ally of the United States of America that would dare send a troop to—

"Vietnam."

That was a speech by Martin Luther King Jr. Four days later, he was slaughtered in Memphis.

Dr. King did not live to see the day, five years later, when we pulled out from Vietnam the last of our flags. That was in 1973. Nor did he live to see the day, in 1975, when Saigon fell and the Communist victors killed hundreds of thousands and forced more than 1.5 million into reeducation camps, causing 2 million others to flee Vietnam.

Lawrence Kaplan is a senior editor of *The New Republic*. He wrote last week, "U.S. troops are the only thing standing between what we see on our television sets today and butchery on a scale that would rival the worst of Saddam Hussein's depredations." Good men will perhaps not be finally governed by consideration of the moral question in Iraq, but they will not conceal that the point is there for men of good will to weigh.

Congressman Jenkins on the Line

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 1

'And one day," Grandma said, "when the phone rings, it will be for you."

Grandma was not talking about the telephone as an expediter of teen romance. She had herself just now put down the telephone, opened the drawer, pulled out her checkbook, and, after a discreet sigh, diminished her bank account. Many candidates have expressed their mortification at having to call constituents personally, asking for money. They do this so often that it becomes easy to suppose they are inured to the exercise, suffering no more than the diabetic after the 1,000th daily shot of insulin.

That may be so, but what about Grandma? And the foredoomed grandson?

The great community of Americans who find themselves called to the telephone, where they will be solicited for cash contributions, fully understand that they (we) are submitting to institutional arrangements that have evolved from a conflict between social imperatives: 1) There are activities in the country which deserve support, and which 2) we wish to see succeed in their struggles to survive, but which 3) we don't want to turn over to government to subsidize.

The temptation to lean on government is persistent, and almost every year the private sector yields a little. Sixty years ago, when it was first suggested that the federal government might contribute to alleviating the financial problems of major private universities, the prospective beneficiaries held up their hands in shock and dismay at the mere proposal. They knew that financial benefits lead inevitably to political subjugation, although they could not have foreseen how far this would go ("How many albinos do you have in your freshman class?"). We learned from that brief period of defiance (1949–59) that it was indeed inevitable that the feds would make demands on colleges they patronized, but that it was not inevitable that college trustees would continue to reject federal money.

But the point here stressed is not the anguish of the person who calls out for money. Rather, it is a moment's thought for the discomfiture of the person who is called on to give the money.

Solicitations are done mostly in the mail (add up, in one month's mail, the calls for help to church, schools, hospitals, and candidates). Yet the enterprising and dogged solicitor nowadays is going to go beyond the mail, using the telephone. Rank can be useful. "A Mr. Jenkins is on the phone for you" is easier to ignore than "Congressman Jenkins is on the phone for you."

You hear the summons. But the name of Congressman Jenkins means nothing to you. You have one and one half seconds to weigh the contingencies. 1) Have you forgotten that it was Congressman Jenkins who got you the ticket for the Army–Navy game your nephew wanted? 2) Is he involved in the charity affair you are in charge of? 3) God! Is he your godson? Your terribly neglected godson? 4) Or is he—most probably—just another congressman who wants to hit you up for his campaign because Jenkins is a right-winger and you are a right-winger? (Why the hell didn't he write me instead of telephoning? Maybe he did write and I lost track of the letter. Maybe I didn't even see the letter.)

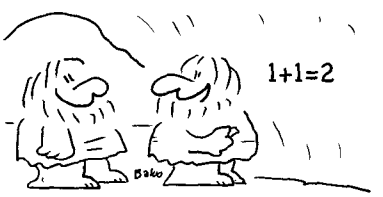
Your one and a half seconds are up.

"Please tell him you couldn't find me. Take his number."

Now you have plenty of time to decide whether you will call the number back. You can even do a little light research on the Internet, find out something about Jenkins. "About Congressman Jenkins . . . He is running for reelection to a sixth term . . ." Well, somebody has been answering his phone calls. "Earned an ACU rating of 88 . . ." All right, all right.

You don't have to return his phone call, but you might send him a check. That's the Hon. W. L. Jenkins, House Office Building, Washington, D.C. Zip? They'll find it.

—Universal Press Syndicate



"If I say so myself, I have to admit it's elegant in its simplicity."

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happy warrior

MARK STEYN

Shark Bait

RUMMAGING through the moldy clippings, I see *The Spectator* gave the piece I wrote that Tuesday the headline "A War for Civilization." As it turned out, that's correct—though I'm not sure I grasped quite how existential it all was that September morning. My instant reaction, as the towers burned and then fell, hit a number of themes I've come back to ad nauseam in the half-decade since—the uselessness of the U.N., the postmodern nature of "the Western alliance," the paradox of the non-imperial hyperpower—and, while I'd like to congratulate myself on getting the big picture, it seems to me the fellows who stayed focused on the small picture may have had the right idea. In Britain's *Observer* that first Sunday, Richard Ingrams wrote a column titled: "Who Will Dare Damn Israel?"

Answer: Take a number and join the line. I used to do a radio show with Ingrams. A likeable cove, if you steered clear of the whole Jew thing, and that's good general advice in Britain and Europe anyway, long before the present unpleasantness arose. Still, I thought his was a pretty kooky angle to take as the rubble was still smoldering. Silly me. Five years on, European airports deny Israeli flights from the U.S. refueling rights just in case they happen to be carrying ammunition that might possibly wind up getting used against Hamas and Hezbollah. In France, Jews are physically assaulted. In Britain, cemeteries are desecrated. In Montreal, a Jewish school is firebombed. The dead of 9/11 seem to have served as a license renewal for the world's oldest hatred.

Here's another thing I got wrong. Do you remember the summer of 2001? Shark attacks. Swimming off the Florida coast, a kid called Jessie Arbogast had his arm ripped off. His uncle retrieved the severed limb from the jaws of the predator and killed it. In its editorial on the subject, the *New York Times* came down on the side of the shark. I thought those days were over. "September 11th was a call to moral seriousness. You cannot compromise with a shark, you cannot negotiate with a suicide bomber," I wrote. "The next shark to chew up a Florida moppet will get a tougher press, even from the *New York Times*."

I must have been drunk. The *Times* is back to siding with the sharks. Every other week, it leaks details of the government's new shark-tracking program or demands full Geneva Convention protection for them. On Labor Day, a terrorist opened fire on a group of Western tourists in Amman, killing a British subject. Rana Sabbagh-Gargour, correspondent for the *Times* of London, also came down on the side of the shark, attributing the attack to "mounting frustration on the streets of the Arab world" over the West's "perceived bias" on Iraq and Lebanon.

Which is the more potent rallying cry? 'Let's roll' or 'Let's roll over and doze off again'?

Lebanon? Hey, why not? Reuters laid the August Heathrow bomb plot at the feet of Tony Blair for "refusing to call for an immediate ceasefire" in Lebanon. That's right, folks. You don't have to invade anyone, you don't have to be supporting one side or the other even rhetorically, you don't have to say a word on the subject. Simply being tardy in issuing a press release demanding a ceasefire is a sufficient "root cause." Tony Blair is the root cause of jihad, and so is the Iraq War. And though neither explains 9/11 or Bali, nor why non–Iraq combatants such as Canada and Germany have been targeted, it's apparently not self-evidently risible to the hundreds of reporters who type it up every other day.

So much for "moral seriousness." After 9/11, when Michael Moore was bemoaning that Osama had targeted Gore-voting states, Jacob Weisberg, editor of Slate, assured us he was a "well-known crank, regarded with considerable distaste even on the left." Three years later, he was sitting alongside Jimmy Carter in the presidential box at the Democratic convention. The crank Left metastasized, swallowing among others the Dems' vice-presidential nominee: As I understand it, the Left's line is that Joe Lieberman is still the rightful winner of the 2000 election, but that they'd have impeached him by now.

I was on C-SPAN the other day swatting aside a lot of dreary questions about Valerie Plame with some scoffing at Richard Armitage. A conspiracy theorist called up to mutter darkly that I appeared never to have heard of the concept of "designated fall-guy."

Well, it's possible that Armitage has been set up by Rove to take the rap. It's also possible that the goofy conspiracist was set up by Rove to float the idea and thereby distract from the real conspiracy. Rather than a call to moral seriousness, 9/11 seems to have severed the last frayed slender thread connecting a big chunk of the American people to reality.

And I'm not even talking about the nuts. In June 2004, a majority of Americans were already telling pollsters the Iraq War was a mistake. Just a year after the invasion. And with a historically low level of casualties. That suggests that "quagmires" and "grim milestones" are mere euphemisms for what Niall Ferguson regards as the American people's geopolitical ADHD. Not all of them, but enough.

I never thought "Let's roll!" was a partisan line, but five years on it is. And, when you're a famously sleepy giant, "Let's roll over and doze off again!" is the most potent rallying cry of all.

"A war for civilization" will by definition be a long one. I never thought quite so many people would check out quite so soon. **NR**

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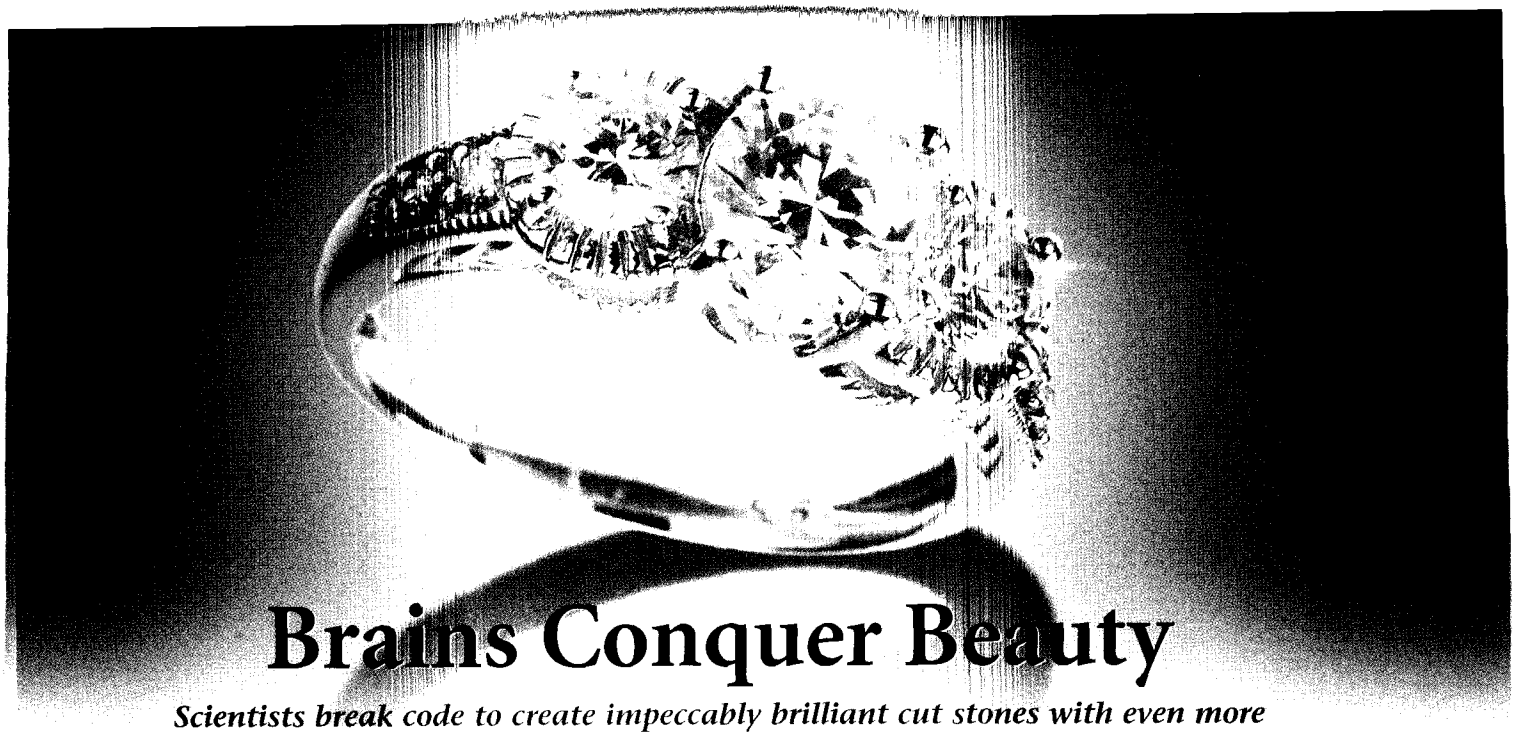

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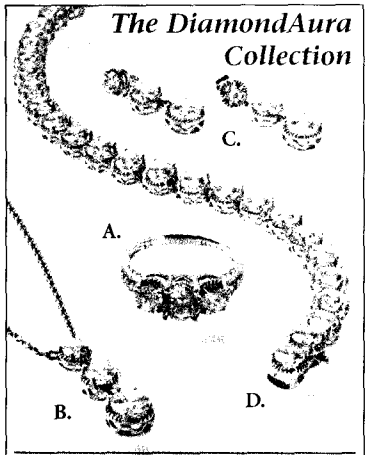

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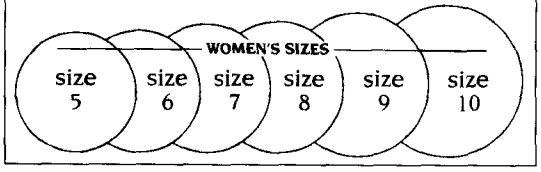

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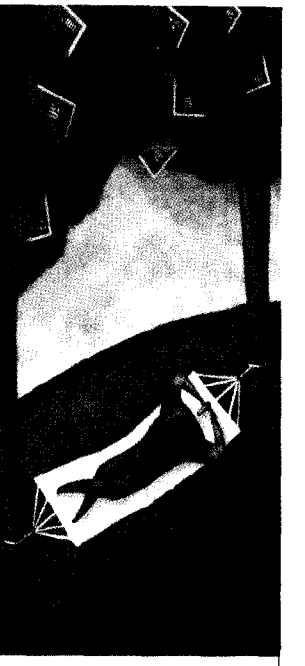

In case of fraud, we believe our cardholders should have zero liability.

That's zero, as in zero.

At Visa, we continue to invest enormous human and financial resources in preventing and detecting fraud. While there's still work to be done, our efforts are clearly paying off.

First and foremost, our cardholders enjoy a remarkable degree of protection from fraud.

We were the leaders in introducing a Zero Liability Policy, which exceeds federal requirements. Zero Liability provides our cardholders 100% protection - they are not liable should fraudulent charges be made, online or off, on their credit or even their debit cards.*

Zero Liability is just one of the ways we at Visa are going the extra mile to protect our cardholders and make transactions safer. It's a responsibility we owe to them, and to ourselves. Because at the end of the day, what's good for our cardholders is good for our business.

For more information
visit us at www.visa.com/security

VISA

* U.S. issued cards only. Visa's Zero Liability Policy does not apply to commercial credit card, or ATM transactions, or PIN transactions not processed by Visa. Cardholder must notify card issuer promptly of unauthorized use. Consult issuer for additional details.

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